KANCHI

A HERITAGE OF ART AND RELIGION

edited by
Nanditha Krishna

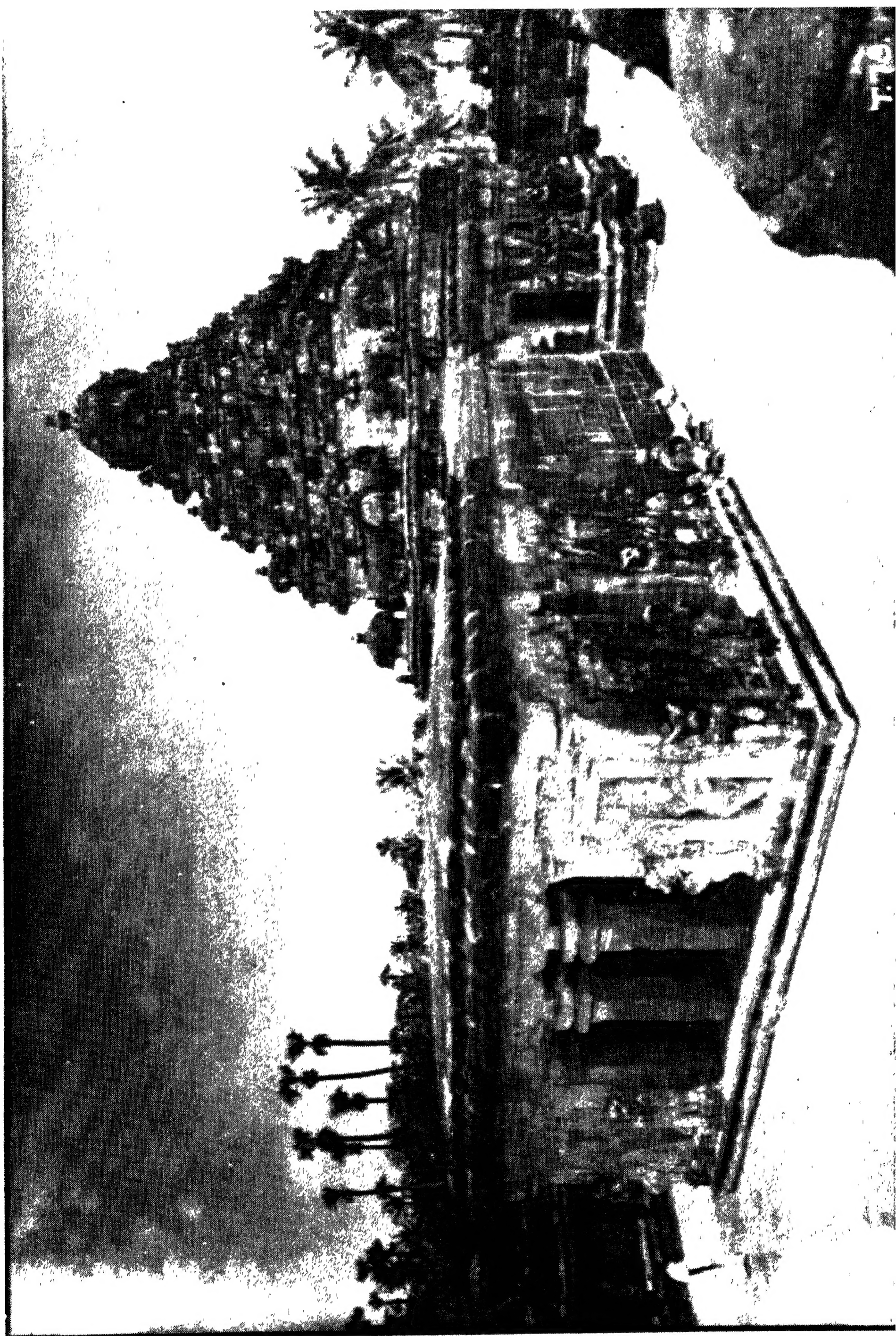
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INTRODUCTION

Nagareshu Kanchi, the greatest of cities, said the bard. One of the seven *mukti kshetras*, it was one of the best-known South Indian cities in the past. Ashoka built a *stupa* here, described by Hiuen-Tsang. It was one of the great centres of learning along with Takshashila, Varanasi, Vallabhi and Nalanda. Patanjali refers to the *Kanchipuraka,* or one who is from Kanchi, in the 2nd century B.C. *Ghatika* was the famous university of Kanchi, a unique one of its kind. Hiuen Tsang praised the city's intellectual eminence and it was this reputation that made Avvaiyar describe Tondaimandalam as a land of wise, learned people. The South Indian form of local government was to have its origins here till it reached its maturity under the Cholas.

Early Tamil literature and inscriptions referred to Kanchipuram as Kachi, Kachipedu, Kanchi, Kanchinagara, Kanchimanagar and Kanchipuram. Of these, Kachi seems to be the earliest name. It also had several other names such as Kamakottam (associated with the Goddess Kamakshi who is the chief deity of this town), Kamapeetham, Pralaya Sindhu, Shivapuram, Brahmapuram, Indupuram, Tundirapuram, Dandakapuram, Mummurteeswaram, Thapomayam, Sakalasiddhi, Kannikappu, Satyavrata Kshetra and Bhulokakailasam.

There are several explanations for the word 'Kanchi'. Probably, the most ancient is the explanation in the Tamil *Manimekhalai* and *Perumpanatrup padai,* that *kanchi* was the name of a tree, which abounded in a forest in this area, after which it came to be called Kanchi. Also, *ka* means Brahma and *anch* means worship. So, Kanchi is the place where Brahma worshipped (Shiva). In Sanskrit, the word Kanchi meant a girdle, and the city was like a girdle to the earth.

Legend has it that, when the Chola king Karikalan was travelling northward to the Himalayas, a hunter approached him and told him about the greatness of Kanchi. The king then had a city constructed on the spot and surrounded it by a wall. Sekkizhar, who narrates the story in the *Periyapuranam,* tells us that the king brought people to live in this city. This legend is reinforced by copperplate inscriptions of the Chola period which mention that Karikala renovated Kanchi and constructed a wall around it.

In a *Perumpanatruppadai*, the author Uruttirankannanar talks about Ilanthiraiyan, a contemporary of Karikala Cholan, and who ruled Kanchi. The Ekambareshvara temple was first constructed during his reign and the famous Raja Veedhi was laid out then. Kanchi, at this time, was located on the southern bank of the Kamba river. To the south of Kanchi was Kachanerikedu, close to which was the settlement of Attiyur with the Varadaraja and the Thiruveh temples.

Four of the *Thevaramas* of the Shaivite Nayanmars, Appar, Sundarar, Manikkavasagar and Sambandar were composed in Kanchi. Appar refers to the Shaiva *Mathams* and to a Marrali temple, also referred to by Sundarar. Two Nayanmars, Thirukkuripputtondar and Aiyadigal Kadavarkon were born in Kanchi, while Sakkiya Nayanar lived here. Thirumular and Pattinattu Adigal also visisted Kanchi.

Of the eighteen Vaishnava *kshetras* in Kanchi, fourteen have been mentioned in the songs of the Vaishnava saints, the Alwars. Poigai Alwar and Thirumazhisai Alwar lived here.

Kanchipuram was the home of the various religious movements of India. Southern Buddhism and Jainism reached their zenith here, Shaivism and Vaishnavism had their beginnings at Kanchi. It was also here that Adi Shankara established one of his *maths*, the Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham with its long line of erudite *Pithadipatis* who have kept Vedantic ideals alive till the present day. There are relics of every religious movement which reached South India, Buddhist *stupas* and statues, Jaina shrines, Shaivite and Vaishnavite temples and even evidences of later Islam. The various cultural streams met here - Aryan and Dravidian, Vedic and non-Vedic, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain.

If Adi Sankara, the propagator of Vedic monism, established a *matha* in Kanchi, Ramanuja, the founder of Vishishtadvaita, lived in Kanchi for a long time, while Vedanta Desika and Thirukkachi Nambi, Vaishnavite scholars and saints, were either born or lived here.

Kanchi's importance can be guaged from the fact that it was connected to the Kadambas of the West Coast, the Western Gangas of Talakkadu and the alter Gangas of Kolar. Besides, the Chalukyas of Badami, the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed, the Kakatiyas of Warrangal, the Telugu Chodas and the Vijayanagara rulers, the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas were all associated with this city at different points in history. In fact, inspite of the development of so many later capitals in South India, Kanchi remained important as a centre of politics and commerce, art and trade. The Chinese records identify Kanchi as an important trading centre in the 2nd century B.C., and there is evidence that it was linked to the Romans through trade in the early years of the Christian era.

The Mauryan connection with Kanchi dates back to the Ashokan period, as indicated by the Mamandur inscription. Hieun Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, describes a *stupa* about 100 ft. high built by the king Ashoka in the city of Kanchi. Copper coins of the Satavahanas have been found in Kanchi, while the Salankayanas of Andhra supported the Buddhist *bhikshus* of Kanchi in the 4th century A.D.

It was also at Kanchi that the foundations of South Indian art and architecture were first laid. The first structural stone temples were built during the reign of the Pallava king Rajasimha I. The Pallavas were closely associated with the

early Chalukyas of Badami, Aihole and Pattadakkal. The two dynasties derived their inspiration from the classical Gupta period which had just preceded them, but developed brilliant local styles. It was at Kanchi that the Dravida *vimana* with its pyramidical terraces developed, which was to reach great heights in the later Chola period, and which travelled as far as South-East Asia, including Indo-China.

Kanchipuram can be called a text book of South Indian art history. There is no other city where each succeeding dynasty left its imprint in the form of art. The Pallava, Chola, Vijayanagar and Nayak kings celebrated their faith by renovating existing temples or building new ones. This lead to a proliferation of architecture and sculpture. Even in painting, this is the only city which contains stylistic examples of three of the four prominent Tamil dynasties, namely Pallava, Vijayanagar and Nayak.

Kanchi was a seat of higher learning, and its *ghatika* is referred to frequently in inscriptions from the 4th century A.D. The Kadamba king, Mayurasharman, of the West Coast (Goa) entered the *ghatika* at this time, while Kakutsthavarman Kadamba, in tracing the origin of his line, describes how Mayurasharman, the founder, went to Kanchi to complete his Vedic learning by studying at its *ghatika*. Appar also refers to Kanchi as a town of great knowledge and learning.

The importance of education in Kanchi can be understood from the fact that the members of the *ghatika* were sometimes called upon to help in selecting the ruler, and it is believed that the Pallava ruler, Nandi Varman Pallavamalla, was selected by the *ghatikas* of Kanchi.

Several great scholars were either born in Kanchi or lived in Kanchi. They include Kachippedu Peruntachanar, Kachippedu Ilantachanar and Kachipedu Kanchikkorranar, Parimelazhagar and Kachiappa Shivachariyar.

Kanchipuram was reported to be a beautiful town and the *Sangam* work, *Perumpanatruppadai*, describes it thus: "Kanchi is beautiful like the heart of the lotus in the navel of Mahavishnu which is said to be the birthplace of Brahma. Here, there are high ramparts around the town which are made of brick. Like the jackfruit tree which is full of singing birds and sweet and big fruit, Kanchi is also full of the noble festivals of people of different faiths. Therefore this city is the greatest of all cities on this earth".

But Kanchi was more than a local wonder. It was from here that Indian culture travelled to the east. Bodhidharma, who took the message of the Buddha to Japan and China, is believed to have belonged to Kanchipuram. The Hindu and Buddhist temples of Indonesia and Cambodia have distinct influences of Pallava art which could only have gone from Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas. These features are there in all South East Asian art - that of Malaysia, Thailand and as far as Vietnam and Borneo. It is likely that there was once a river

connecting the Pallava port at Mamallapuram to the Pallava capital at Kanchi. For this alone can explain the choice of Kanchipuram as the capital of the sea-faring Pallavas.

The papers published in this book are the work of a group of erudite scholars presented during a seminar - *Nagareshu Kanchi* - organised by the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Institute of Indological Research, a part of the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation. They have been compiled to coincide with the visit of his Holiness Jagadguru Shri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal, Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, on February 10th, 1992, to bless the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation and to inaugurate the newly constructed building of the Saraswathi Kendra Centre for Children, established by the Foundation.

Apart from the scholars who have contributed the articles, this production has been possible because of the dedication and hard work of so many persons: Shobha Hebbar and Shakunthala Jagannathan who edited the proofs, V.Shanthi and Vidya Krishna on the computer, Y.Venkatesh, Padma Kiran and David Raj who did the drawings and layout, Geetha Sundaram who collected and checked all the papers, S.Sumatra who collected the library references, Mani and Sekhar who printed the running matter, Ramdas of Seetha Printers who printed the photographs and the cover and all the others in the C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation who contributed in so many ways.

Dr.C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar's mother Rangammal (alias Pattammal) belonged to Damal, a village 10 km. from Kanchi on the Kanchi-Bangalore highway, and his ancient family house still adjoins the Ekambreshwara temple. In fact, the annual feeding at the *Panguni Uttiram* festival of the Ekambreshwara temple is still conducted at this house. It is but appropriate that the C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar Institute of Indological Research organised the seminar *Nagareshu Kanchi*, followed by this publication, as a tribute to a great city and its people who contributed so much to the cultural, social and political heritage of India.

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THE HISTORY OF KANCHIPURAM

by

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Kanchi, the ancient city of the south, is described as one of the seven religious cities of India, the others being Ayodhya, Mathura, Gaya, Kasi, Avanti and Dwaraka. It is significant to note that except Kanchi, the other six cities are situated north of the Vindhyas. Amongst these cities, Kanchi was a political, religious and cultural centre. From the dawn of civilisation to the present day, this city has witnessed the rise and fall of many dynasties, paving the way for the growth of different religions in different periods of history. The religious leanings of various ruling families can be observed through their reminiscences. As Prof.T.V.Mahalingam points out,[1] it is a city of different cultures such as Aryan and non-Aryan, Vedic and non-Vedic, northern and southern, and religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism and also Islam. It was a seat of education, of religion and philosophy and of art.

The antiquity of Kanchi is very difficult to ascertain. However, literature, epigraphy and the archaeological evidences prove its existence. For example, the Sangam works *Ahananuru*[2] and *Perumpanatruppadai*, describe the city of Kanchi as the crown-jewel of Tondaimandalam. The above sources, particularly literature and epigraphs, furnish various names for this city. They are Kanchi, Kaanchi, Kachchi, Kachhipedu, Kanchimanagara, Attiyuru, Shaivite names like Pralaya-sindhu, Shivapuram, Vindupuram, Mummurtishvaram, Kamakottam and also Varadarajapuram. In one of the verses of the *Perumpanatruppadai*[3], a king called Tiraiyan is associated with Kanchi. He is also called Kachchiyar and the place may be named after him. It is interesting to note that there is a lake called Tiraiyaneri in Kanchi. A copper-plate charter of the Pallava period refers to a lake called Tiraiyaneri, showing the association of Tiraiyan of the Sangam period with Kanchi. The Arulala Perumal temple inscription[4] mentions other names for Kanchi, such as Attiyur or Tiruvattiyuru derived from the tree *atti* (*ficus glomerata*). T.V. Mahalingam opines [5] that the name Kanchi has various origins. He states that "as a Tamil word, it is split up into two, *ka* and *anchi*. *Ka* is taken to mean Brahma and *anchi* or *anchittal* to mean worship. This shows that the name stands for the place where Brahma worshipped Shiva. Again, *ka* is taken to mean eminence, headship, bliss and Kanchi to mean the place where one gets supreme bliss." It is also said that the name is derived either from a tree called the Kanchi tree or from the Sanskrit word Kanchi which means 'girdle', meaning that the city was like a girdle to the earth. The name of Kanchi may also be connected with the ruler Kachhi of the Sangam period. According to the *Perumpanatruppadai*, Kanchi was a beautiful walled city.

The city Kanchi was described as resembling the lotus issuing out of the navel of Lord Vishnu, the Creator of Brahma. There were high brick walls enclosing the army barracks, and a thick, protective forest. The roads were deep with ruts due to the constant plying of heavy and strong chariots. There was a busy market place where businessmen were always engaged in business. It was a city unequalled, in which the people engaged themselves in enjoying the festivals of different religious sects. While the Sangam work talks about Kanchi in this fashion, a later work of the 6th century i.e., Hieun Tsang's work,[6] connects Kanchi with Ashoka who erected *stupas* here. The archaeological findings of this place may prove the fact that Kanchi is situated in Tondaimandalam i.e., Dravida or Damila country. In Dandin's *Avantisundarikatha*, Tondaimandalam is known as Damila country. One of the inscriptions of the Ikshvakus of Nagarjunakonda,[7] refers to the Damila country. It is probably the first time that we come across Damila as the name of a country, in the epigraphs and the Kuram plates of the Pallava, Paramesvaravarman I[8], who refers to a king called Ashokavarman as one of the early rulers of Kanchi. In the opinion of Prof. K.A.N.Sastry, "it may well be a relic of Mauryan rule in the south" [9].

The epigraphs of different dynasties, engraved on the walls, pillars, pilasters and lake-slabs, are more than 650 in number. In addition, a few epigraphs inscribed on copper plates and in stone outside Kanchipuram and in present Tamilnadu also refer to this city as the capital of the period. The number of inscriptions varies from dynasty to dynasty: the Pallavas (12 to 15), the Cholas (245), the Telugu-Pallavas (48), the Pandyas (12), the Hoysalas (3), the Telugu-Chodas (3), the Banas (1), the Kakatiyas (4), the Cheras (1), the later Pallavas (7), the Sambhuvarayas (10), the Vijayanagaras (160), and the Mughals (2). These records in and around Kanchi narrate the involvement in the development of this holy place of the ruling dynasties of the historical period.

The coins discovered in the excavations reveal the existence of the Satavahanas at Kanchi[10]. It is supported by later excavations carried out by the University of Madras in this place. The first and foremost epigraphical evidence to refer to Kanchi as the capital is the Mayidavolu plate of Yuvamaharaju Sivaskandavarman,[11] though the Manchikallu stone inscription of Simhavarman[12] is considered as the earliest record of the Pallavas. It was issued by Shivaskandavarman in the capacity of Yuva-maharaja from the capital city Kanchi to a place situated in Amdhapatha (Andhra Pradesh). Among all the Pallava rulers of Kanchi, Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha is considered as the first king to build a structural temple in stone in Kanchi. It is a known fact that the famous Kailasanatha temple was constructed during his period. One of the Kailasanatha temple inscriptions informs us that Sribhara (Narasimha II) was the builder of this temple[13]. It is stated that the queens Rangapataka and Lokamahadevi were associated as much as the king in the construction of a shrine in the complex of the Kailasanatha temple.

Epithets like *Vadya Vidhyadhara*, *Atodya Tumburu* and *Vina-naradu* are a few titles attributed to him. The Vaikuntha Perumal and the Muktishvara temples are attributed to Nandivarman II Pallavamalla. It is interesting to note that there is mention of Kamakkottam of Kanchi in one of the inscriptions of Nandivarman II from Kilsattamangalam. About six stone inscriptions belonging to Mahendravarman I, Narasimhavarman II, Mahendravarman III and Nandivarman engraved in the temples of Ekambaranatha, Kailasanatha, Kamakshi and Muktishvara, mention not only the mythological geneology of the Pallavas but also their building activity[14]. The Kailsanatha temple inscription records some of the epithets of Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha such as *Shivachudamani* and *Shankarabhakta*.

There is no history of Kanchi without the Cholas. The first Chola occupation of Kanchi is referred to in one of the inscriptions of Parakesari Vijayalaya dated to his fourth regnal year. The Chola king Parantaka I's inscriptions discovered at Kanchi itself mention his queen Mutt Kilanadigal, daughter of Kadu Pattigal[15]. The Chola inscriptions of Parantaka I Uttamachola, inform us that the kings made a number of gifts to the temples of Kailasanatha, Ekambaranatha, etc. Parantaka I and Parthivendra confined themselves to the temples of Kanchi. The Muktishvara temple did not receive any gifts from the Cholas, nor did the Kamakshi and Kachhishvara temples. The occurence of Rajaraja I inscriptions in Kamakshi and Kachcheshvara temples gave them much importance, besides inscriptions of Rajendra I. Thus both father and son patronised the temples of Kamakshi and Kachcheshvara.

Kanchi developed into an important seat of political activity during the period of Kulottunga I who enriched the temples at Kanchi with a number of land donations. A gift of a village was made to the temple of Sri Karaneshvara Mudaiya Mahadeva at Kanchi. An inscription of Kulottunga I dated in his 20th regnal year refers to Kanchi as *nagaram*[16].

Rajaraja III Parakesari's period was the most important one in the history of Kanchi. It was in this period that there was a struggle for power between the Cholas, Pandyas, Hoysalas, Kakatiyas and the Kadavarayas. The net result was that the Cholas lost Kanchi. Rajaraja III issued more than sixty inscriptions at Kanchi. Due to the internal struggles, the Chola kingdom at Kanchi was reduced to a feudatory state during the reign of Rajendra III and the Pandyas dominated Kanchi. The reign of Rajaraja III Parakesari, who ruled the Tamil country from 1216 A.D. to 1246 A.D., opened a new chapter in the history of Kanchi. He made alliances or fought with other feudatory families, the Rashtrakutas, the Hoysalas, the Pandyas, the Kadavarayas, the Vanakovaraiyas and the Kakatiyas, the Telugu Cholas of the Andhra region. The Rashtrakutas' contacts with Kanchi started from the period of Dantidurga[17] and Krishna I. Different opinions have been expressed by scholars on the contacts of these two kings with Kanchi. No inscription of the Rashtrakutas has been discovered

so far in Kanchi. However, a few epigraphs of Dantidurga, Krishna II, Govinda II, Govinda III and Krishna III outside Tamilnadu refer to Kanchi as one of the cities occupied during their wars. The same was the case with the Kalyanachalukyas. The Hoysalas and their officials patronised the temples. It is stated that one Chandramauli, a minister of Hoysala Ballala II, and his wife Achchamike, made donations to the Vishnu temple at Kanchi. A large number of gifts were made to the temple of Arulala Perumal by the Hoysala officials. The Telugu-Cholas and the Telugu-Pallavas made Kanchi their headquarters and contributed their mite to the cultural development of Kanchi at various stages. Among the Telugu-Chola kings, Tirukkalattideva alias Gandagopala was represented by a number of inscriptions at Kanchi, which record his liberal grants for various services to the temple of Arulala Perumal for a permanent endowment called *Gandagopala sannidhi*. The Kakatiyas, who ruled the Andhra country for two centuries, also maintained contacts with Kanchi. The inscription of Kakatiya Ganapatideva dated 1250 A.D., refers to the royal gift of the village Kilattur for the service, *Ganapatideva-sannidhi*, to the god Tiruvenkambam Udaiyanayanar in the Ekambaranatha temple. Another important inscription of this dynasty contains two dates-June 11 and June 16, 1316 A.D. - which refer to the valour of Muppodinayaka, the *mahapradhani* and *karyakarta* of Prataparudra who made donations to the Arulala Perumal temple. The Pandyas too issued a few inscriptions at Kanchi.

The Vijayanagara kings who controlled the entire south with their victories and their contributions to art, architecture, language and literature, also left reminders of their period in Kanchi. Starting from 1361 A.D. to the last year of their reign (1648 A.D.), there are several inscriptions revealing their glory. As one scholar says, "it can apparently be noticed that the growing spirit of Hinduism was kept alive during the entire reign of Vijayanagara rule and the sovereigns were tolerant of all the religious sects of Hinduism. The distinguished monarchs of the empire such as Krishnadevaraya, Achyuta and Sadashivaraya showed exemplary tolerance to the heterogenous elements, diverse interests and communities of those days"[19].

According to the *Maduravijayam*, Kampanna, the son of Bukka I, put down Sambhuvaraya's influence over Kanchi[20]. The inscription dated Saka 1282 (1361 A.D) refers to the ministers of the Vijayanagara dynasty, namely Somappa and Gopanna. Gopanna is described as the supervisor of the temples of Kanchi. Somappa assisted Kumara Kampanna. Kumara Kampanna issued about sixteen inscriptions, most of them referring to the donation of gifts to the temples and the appointment of a number of officers to supervise the temples and to administer the area properly. Harihara II had arranged the gold covering for the *Shrivimana* of the Kamakshi temple[21]. Devaraya II (1422-45 A.D) is said to have built an *agrahara* in the name of Shri Kamakshipuram[22]. It is stated that his *mandala-purusha*, probably an officer under Devaraya, was responsible for this *agrahara*. Another inscription of his reign refers to the misappropriation

of the temple properties by several officers and the local people and the king's order restraining them. It is stated that the Gajapati king, Hamvira, attacked Kanchi in the reign of Mallikarjuna. Kanchi was attacked and looted by the Bahmani Sultan, Mohammad III. Krishnadevaraya maintained close contacts with Kanchi. About twenty three inscriptions of this king are available at various sites in Kanchi. They record the gifts to the temples made by the king or by his officials. He constructed temple cars for Vinayaka and Krishna, regulated the routes on which the temple cars were taken in procession during the festivals, made a gold covering for the *punyakoti-vimana* of the Arulala Perumal temple[23], and performed *tulabharas*. A few inscriptions of Achyutaraya furnish the details of *tula-purusha danas* [24]. He performed *tula-purusha dana* in the *sannidhi* of the Varadaraja Perumal temple. It is stated that the king, his queen Varadadevi and the prince, Kumara Venkatadri, weighed themselves in pearls and gold[25]. Besides this, he also performed *Mahabhuta ghatidana* and *nityadana* after his victorious campaigns aganist his rebels[26]. We have a few inscriptions of the later kings of this dynasty which describe the various gifts given by them. An inscription of Sriranga III (1642-72 A.D) is perhaps the last inscription relating to Kanchi. After that, the city must have been occupied by the Golkonda forces.

The Muslim historians of the 16th century A.D., namely Farishta and Taba-taba, refer to the conquest of Kanchi. According to the first, Muhammed III occupied Kanchi (Kunchy) where "the temple walls and roofs were plated with gold and ornamented with precious stones". The second historian says that Muhammadans reached Kanchi (Ganji) in 1481 A.D.[27] and further says "from the rise of Islam upto this time no Muhammadan monarch had set foot in it; no stranger had laid hand on the cheek of the bride of that idol temple" [28].

Thus, the glory of Kanchi which began in the early centuries of the Christian era, reached its zenith in later years. It was the centre of political and cultural activity, paving the way for the existence of a common culture.

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A TAMIL-BRAHMI CAVE INSCRIPTION NEAR KANCHI

by

I.A.S. (Ret

The antiquity of Kanchipuram is confirmed by the occurrence of a Tamil-Brahmi cave inscription near the city at Mamandur.

Mamandur is already famous for the four rock-cut temples of Pallava Mahendra Varman, situated at the foot of the low range of hills about half a mile to the west of the village. The natural cavern with the Tamil-Brahmi inscription is about a couple of hundred yards to the north of the Pallava caves and half-way up the hillock (plate 2).

The natural cavern has been improvised as a shelter. A shallow drip- line is cut across the overhanging rock to prevent rain water from flowing into the shelter.

The Tamil-Brahmi inscription is engraved on the brow of the cavern in four lines. (plate 1). It is fairly well-preserved except for the loss of the first few letters in the fourth line.

The inscription reads as follows:

L.1 *Kani man*

L.2 *Tenur tanta kon kunru*

L.3 *ceyitan tacan ciru*

L.4 *van*

The text can be translated thus:

"(The) hill (of) KANIMAN, (the) Chieftain (who) took Tenur. (The rock-shelter was) made by Ciru ..... van, (the stone - mason").

Palaeographically, the inscription is interesting as the only one in the Tamil country using the northern variety of *ma*, found in the post-Mauryan inscriptions. The occurrence of the special Tamil characters for *na* and *ra* confirm that the script is Tamil-Brahmi and the language is Tamil. The occurrence of curved medial signs for *i* and *o*, the developed forms of *na* and *na* and other features indicate that this is a late Tamil-Brahmi inscription to be assigned approximately to the end of the 2nd or early 3rd century A.D.

Linguistically, the use of *tanta* in the sense of 'who took' is interesting. *Ceyitan* for *ceytavan* is also archaic.

Historically, the inscription is important as it gives us a hitherto unknown Chief's name, Kaniman. This name can be compared with that of Tondaiman. It is possible that he belonged to the clan of Tiraiyar who ruled Tondaimandalam before the advent of the Pallavas in that region.

Alternatively, Kaniman could be a Chera chieftain's name like those of Malaiyamans and Ariyamans who ruled over the adjoining territories. However, in the absence of any literary record, we are in the realm of speculation.

This inscription is the earl epigraphic record of a battle in the Tamil country. The inscription sta s that Kaniman took Tenur. We do not know where this place was or any other detail of the battle. The endowment of the rock-shelter was probably made as a votive offering after victory.

We do not also know to whom the rock-shelter was given. Both Buddhist and Jaina monks used rock caverns as shelter in the rainy season. Kanchipuram was a special centre for both these faiths. However, it is more probable that the offering was to a Jaina monk as the Tamil-Brahmi cave inscriptions in the Tamil country do not provide any Buddhist association, while many of these sites were continued to be occupied by the Jainas, as the later Vatteluttu and Tamil inscriptions and Jaina sculptures testify.

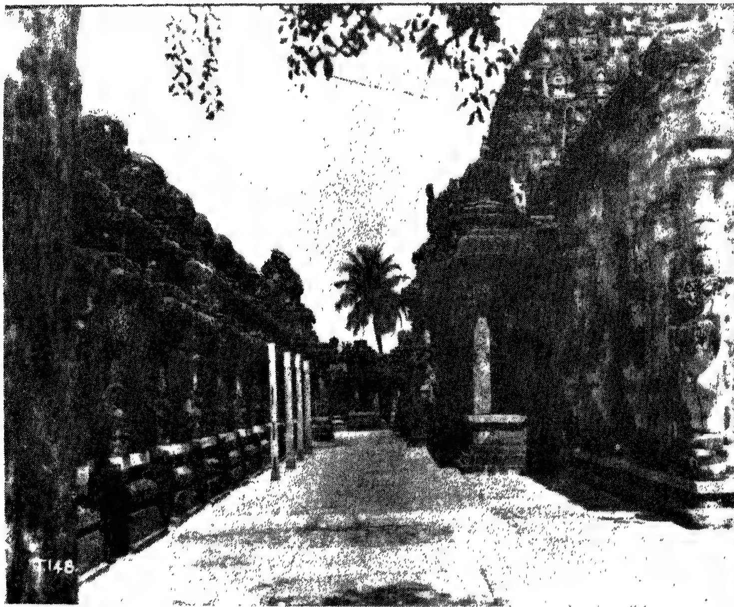
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1. **Tamil Brahmi Inscription,** Mamandur, 2nd - 3rd Century A.D.





3. Kailasanatha Temple with the cloisters to the left
Pallava, 7th Century A.D.



SHAIVISM IN KANCHI

by

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Kanchipuram, one of the most important cultural centres of ancient India, served as a pivotal centre of most of the religious faiths that flowered in India from very early times. Shaivism seems to have occupied a leading role in the city throughout the centuries, the larger settlement - the *periya* Kanchipuram or Big Kanchipuram - being a synonym of Shaiva Kanchi to this day . The adoration of Shiva was well established in Tamilnadu even from the beginning of the Sangam age, and is related in a number of works of Sangam anthology. It would require almost a volume to trace the history of Shaivism in Kanchi, but this article is confined to a study of the spread of the *Bhakti* movement spearheaded by the Shaivite saints and Vaishnavite *Alwars*, beginning from 600 A.D. Inscriptions, monumental temples, literature, musical compositions, Puranic literature and foreign notices are available in large numbers, and throw valuable light on the subject.

One of the most interesting sources is a dramatic composition named Mattavilasa Prahasana, by the Pallava emperor, Mahendravikrama I. That the work was obviously composed in his youth is suggested by the phrase found in the drama - *Yauvana gunabhara* Mattavilasa Prahasana. Gunabhara and Mattivilasa were his titles. The work may be assigned to A.D.600. It begins with a salutation to Lord Shiva as Kapalin, the universal dancer. The invocatory verse is pregnant with meaning, from the point of Shaiva philosophy, dance, logic, etc. The *Chakkiyars*, who staged the drama in Kerala, took three to five nights to interpret the meaning of the verse through the medium of dance. Shiva, as Kapalin, is said to perform *nritta* - the *Trailokya yatra nritta* exhibiting different kinds of *rasas* through speech, gestures, costumes, and *gunas*. In the cosmic dance of Shiva, the universal spectator is goddess Parvati, who is none other than the part of Shiva as Ardhanari. So the poet says in this verse, that Shiva is the spectator of his own dance. The verse also begins with the four kinds of *abhinayas* listed in Bharata's Natya Shastra - *bhasha (vacikam), vesha (aharya), vapuhkriya (angitra)* and *guna (sattvika)* . The verse reads as follows:

Bhasaresavapu kriya gunakrtan

Asritya bhedan gatam

Bhavaresavasat Anekarasatam

Trailokya yatra mayam

Nrttam Nispratipattibodha Mahima

Yah Preksakasca Svayam

So vyaptavani Bhajanam

Disatu vo divyeh kapali yasah

The main hero of the work, who appears as a drunkard, is a Kapalika, his lady friend, also a drunkard, is a follower of the Kapalika school. The former is called a Kapalika *upasaka* and the lady a Kapalika *upasika*. Though a drunkard, the Kapalika here and there gives out the philosophic concepts of the Kapalika system. There was a belief that by following the path of penance, *tapas*, one could attain a beautiful body, *tapasa kamarupala prapyate*.

In his drunken mood, the Kapalika says, drinking liquor, enjoying the lovely face of the beloved, and wearing attractive costumes are indeed the path of liberation. This great path is taught by Shiva. The drunkard begins the exposition with the salutation, *Namashivaya:*

Namah Sivaya

Peya Sura Priyatamamukham iksitavyam

grahyah svabhavalalito vikratasca vesah

yenedam idrsam Adrsyata Moksavartma

Dirgayurastu Bhagavan Sa Pinakapoou

This seems to be the wayward Siddhanta of the Kapalika Shaivas - wine, women and dress - taken to perverted extremes in Kanchi. Occasionally, these Kapalikas frequented the temple of Ekamba in Kanchi. Such men were called *dushta* Kapalikas, the devilish Kapalikas. A Buddha *bhikshu* who sees the Kapalika exclaims, "That was the one living by the side of Ekamba". The text reads, *Ai ayam Eambavasi dutta kavalio* (Here the text is Prakrit. The editor, Dr. N.P.Unni, has taken the word *Eamba* to stand for *Ekamra* and renders it into Sanskrit as *Ekamravasi*. The great Shiva temple of Kanchi was known in early times only as Ekamba in the singular shaft, and not as *Ekamra*, ie., the mango tree. This is attested by hundreds of literary and epigraphical material).

Besides the Kapalikas, the *Mattavilasa Prahasana*, also refers to Maheshvaras and Pashupatas, indicating that Maheshvara, Pashupata and Kapalika Shaivas were living in Kanchi then. In one place, the Pashupata says that the Kapalikas follow their *agamas*: *Agamanugatam abhihikam*. In another place, Shiva is said to perform *mahavrata* for having cut off the head of Brahma.

Astaya prayato mahavratam idam

balendu cudamanih

svami no mumuce pitamaha sirah

chedodbhavadenasah

nathopi tridivaukasam

trisirasam tvastuh tanujam pura

hatva yajasatena santaduritah

bheje punah punyatam

The Kapalikas, it seems from the text, were living in poverty, whereas the Buddhist monks were enjoying great wealth in Kanchi around the 6th century A.D. When the Pashupata asks both the Kapalika and the Buddha *bhikshu* to go to the court, the Kapalika laments his poverty and says the Buddha *bhikshus*, with the enormous wealth at their disposal, would bribe the judges and get a favourable judgement. It brings out the contrast in the living conditions of Kapalikas and Buddhists. It also brings out the vulnerability of the judiciary to bribes.

The *Advaita* exponent, Shankara, is criticised in later times as *Prachanna Bauddha,* a concealed *Bauddha*, thereby indicating that he adopted some of the tenets of Buddhism in his Advaita. But what is interesting is that by the 6th century A.D, the followers of Shaivism ridiculed Buddha as one who copied the doctrines of Vedanta and the Mahabharata and built up his teachings for erring Brahmins. Buddha was condemned as the worst thief, worse than Karpata, who perfected the art of stealing.

Kapali:- Namah kharapatayeti vaktavyam

yena corasastram prnitam athava kharapatodai asmin

adhikare buddha eva arthan

mahabharatat api

vipranam misatam eva

krtavan kosasancayam

A very important statement made by Mahendra Varman in 600 A.D. states that "Buddhism is only Vedanta in a different garb". Besides the temple of Ekamba, this text also refers to another temple of Shiva called the Purvasthali, which would be Kilaittali in Tamil [ref. Mattavilasa Prahasana of Mahendra Vikrama, original with translation by Dr.N.P.Unni, published by College Book House, Trivandrum, 1974].

Purvasthali means the temple situated in the eastern part of the city of Kanchi. This seems to have been a popular temple in 600 A.D. But among the temples sung by the *Thevaram* saints, this eastern Shiva temple does not find a mention, whereas the one in the west has been adored by the saints as Kachimerrali.

Among the temples celebrated by the *Shaiva* saints, mainly Appar and Sambandar, in the 2nd century, Ekambara occupies the foremost position. It is called Ekamba in the great city of Kanchi - "Kanchi *managar kambam*". Sambandar had sung four hymns on this temple which include one *yamakam* and one *irukku kural*. Another composition is called *Kalikkovai*.

Thirunavukkarasar, a contemporary of Mahendravarman, sings seven hymns on Ekambam. Appar's hymns are known for their emotional devotion. Three of the hymns may be cited as throwing interesting light on the state of Shaivism. In one verse, Shiva is said to be adored by the twelve Adityas, eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, Brahma and Vishnu and the two Ashvini *devatas*:

Vuraikkum kazhinthu inghu
vunarvariyan vulghuvar vinaiyai
Karaikkum ena kaithozhuvathallaal
Kathirorgal ellam
Viraikhol malaravan mal
Ennvasukkal eagadasargal
Iraikum amirtharkutha
Ariyaonnan engal yekambane.

- Appar

In another verse, Appar refers to the Devas-Hari, Brahma, Chandra, and Surya-taking refuge under the parasol of Shiva as Mahadeva:

Ariyayan Indiran Chandrathithar amararellam
Uhuriyanin kotrakkadaithalaiyarunang kakkidanthar
Puritharu punsadai poga munivarellam pulambughinraar
Eritharu senjadai ekamba! ennho thirukurippe

- Appar

And the third verse mentions the devotees who wear ashes, sleep on the bare ground, and adore the feet of the Lord. This obviously is a reference to the *Pashupata vidya*:

Pambarai serthippadarunj sadaimudi palvannane
Kumbalaiseitha karathalathanbargal koodi pannal
Sambarai poosi tharaiyil purandu ninthal charan enru
Embalipparkadku irangu kandai kachchi ekambane

- Appar

Saint Sundaramurti has sung only one hymn on this temple. However, in all the eleven verses of the hymn, he sings about the worship offered by Uma on the river bank to the Linga, which is the *sthala purana* of this temple. Sundara gives the full legend of Uma frightened by the floods, embracing the Linga, and Shiva manifesting from the same:

Yelavarkuzhal umai nangai
Enrum yethivazhipada petra
Kalakalanai kamban emmanai
Kaana kannadiyen petravare.

- Sundarar

Interestingly, Sundara refers to Shiva as the eight-armed Ekamba:

Karangal ettudai kambanai emmanai

Singing about another temple of Kanchi, Sundara refers to the Kamakkottam, the temple of Kamakshi, in the ancient city of Kanchi - *Kachi mutur Kamakkottam*. The other temples that come in for praise in the hands of the *Thevaram* saints are Onakantantali, Merrali and Anekatangapadam. There were other Shiva temples, which were either not visited by the saints or the hymns have not survived.

The 8th century witnessed an efflorescence of Shaivism evidenced by over ten temples built in the Shivakanchi area by the Pallava rulers. Most of them seem to have been built by the Pallava king Rajasimha, to whose period these are assigned by authorities, on stylistic consideration. The greatest to be built in *circa* 700 A.D, was the Rajasimheshvara, now called the Kailasanatha temple. There are many points of interest about this temple. But we will set out only a few here:

* It shows that this great temple was laid out as per the science of *Vastu* treatises - in what is known as the *Paramashayi pada*, a technical accomplishment.
* It carries a great number of sculptural representations of Shiva in his *Samhara* and *Anugraha* forms, which prove that by this time almost all the legends of the *Mahapuranas* were known to the south.
* There is a pointed reference to the king hearing a celestial voice, an obvious reference to the legend of Pusalar.
* The builder king Rajasimha calls himself a follower of Agamas, *Agamanusari* and a lover of Ithihasa, *Ithihasapriya* and there is reference to the king as a follower of the Shaiva Siddhanta *marga* and one who got cleansed of his impurities. This is the earliest reference to Shaiva Siddhanta in the south. The epigraphs of the ruler give a complete picture of Shaiva doctrines.

In Chola times, the enlargement of existing structures was the main concern, though some new temples like the Varahareshvara came into existence. Among the fine structures of the age may be mentioned the Mayanan - Thirukachi Mayanam now within the temple complex of Ekambranatha. Besides the

temple structures of the age, mention may be made of the graphic description of Shaivism in Kanchi given by Sekkilar in his Periyapuranam. For a detailed reference, in the chapter on Thirukkuruppu Tondar in the Periyapuranam, Sekkilar says that Uma expressed a desire to worship Shiva as per the Agamic code taught by him. Shiva directed her to proceed to Kanchi and do the *archana*. At Kanchi, the serpent king Padmanaga welcomed the Devi and requested her to stay in the *bila*, which she accepted. Even now, goddess Kamakshi is believed to stay in the *bila*. According to Sekkilar, Kanchi received the exalted position on account of the goddess performing *tapas*.

embiratti ivvezhulageendraval

thambiranai thavathal eithi

kambai yattril vazhipadu kanchi endru

umbar potrum pathiyum ullathu.

- Sekkilar

An interesting Sanskrit text gives the same view:

Kancipuriti vikhyata

yasyam disi manorama

kamaksi tapasa kampa

tate devam atosayat

With reference to the Vijayanagar age (14th - 17th century), Shaivism in Kanchipuram reached a significant stage. We might mention three important points in this regard: After the disastrous incursion of Malik Kaffur in 1310, who destroyed many temples and their wealth, Kumara Kampana captured Kanchi and went to all the temples and saw that worship was restarted on a great scale in them. Secondly, Krishnadevaraya, the great Vijayanagar emperor, enriched Kanchi by erecting the tall towers, one in the temple of Varadaraja and the other in the Ekambranatha temple, which, to this day, is the tallest in the city of Kanchi. The third point of interest about the Vijayanagar contribution that deserves notice is the Sanskrit rendering of the Periyapuranam of Sekkilar by Rajachudamani Dikshita. It is probably the work that goes by the name Upamanya Bhakta Vilasa. The translation was completed within the precincts of the Ekambranatha temple, and the translator was gifted with a house site, land and some hereditary previleges.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw great men composing the Kanchi Puranas. Many such Puranas are known, but two deserve notice. One was called the Kanchiyampuranam or Kamakshi Ekambranar Puranam and was composed by Kachalaiyar Matava Shiva Jnanamunivar who died in 1785 A.D. He wrote the first part of the other Kanchipuranam. His disciple, Kavirakshasa

Kachiyappamunivar, wrote the second part and completed the work. Kachiyappar died in 1790. It is seen that by 1790 A.D., there were more than eighty Shiva temples in the city of Kanchipuram. Some of the temples mentioned in these texts deserve a seperate study on account of the historic names they bear, as for example, Vishnuseveshvaram, Sevvantishvaram, Kesari Ishvaram, Mangaleshvaram, Vaneshvaram, Narasingeshvaram, Viraraghava Ishvaram, etc.

The texts also mention Virattanam, Mayanam, and Karonam - significant for their concepts.

The history of Shaivism in Kanchi is a very long one. Only a part of the movement is outlined here to stimulate further study in the field.

VAISHNAVISM IN KANCHI

by

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Kanchi, the heart of Thondainadu, has a very close relationship with Vaishnavism.

The 4000 Divyaprabandams which contain the essence of Vedic philosophy are also the major texts of Vaishnavism. They are also known as or personified as *Thamizhmarai* or *Dravida Vedam*.

What is the origin of the Divyaprabandhams? One rainy night, Poigai Alwar, Bhoothathalwar and Peyalwar took shelter at Thirukoyilur in Sage Mirukandu's *ashram*. There was just enough place for the three to stand as the room was very small. It was pitch dark and the Lord descended into the room to have a glimpse of his three *bhaktas*. Unaware of his presence in the room but feeling the discomfort due to the presence of a fourth person, Poigaialwar lit a lamp.

Vaiyam thagaliya varkadale neiyaga

Veyyakadthiron vilakkaga - seiya

Sudarazhiyanadikke soottinen solmalai

Idarazhi neengugaveyendru.

(Mudal Thiruvandadi - 1)

Taking the Universe for a lamp, using the sea for oil and the sun for a wick, Poigaialwar lit the lamp. He was followed by Bhoothathalwar.

Anbethagalizha aarvame neyyaga

Inburugusindai iduthiriya - nanpurughi

Gnanachchudar vilakketrinen naranarku

Gnanathamizhpurintha nan.

(Irandam Thiruvandadi - 2)

Taking love for a lamp, dedication for *ghee* and supreme devotion for a wick, he lighted the lamp of knowledge and offered this in his chaste Tamil. With the help of these two lamps, Peyalwar got the vision of the Almighty.

An overwhelmed Peyalwar describes the Almighty as he sees him in poetry as follows:

Thirukkandane ponmenikanden, thigazhum

Arukkanani niramum kanden serikilarum

Ponnazhikanden purisangamkanden

Ennazhi vannan palinru.

(Moonram Thiruvandadi - 1)

The Divyaprabandham originated thus with the three *pasurams* written by the above mentioned Alwars.

The first and foremost among the Alwars is Poigai Alwar. The Divyaprabandham originated from his first *Thiruvandadi*. He also takes credit for being the first person to write Vedic philosophy in Tamil and in poetic form.

Thiruarangantha Amudhanar felicitates Poigai Alwar thus:

Varuthumpuravirulmaatra empoigaipiran, maraiyin

Kuruthin porulaiyum senthamizhthannaiyum kootti, onranth

Thiriththanreritha thiruvilakkai ....

(Ramanootruandadi - 8)

In the above verse Thiruarangantha Amudhanar eulogizes Poigai Alwar as the person who has blended religious philosophy with Tamil, which is sweeter than honey, to form a wick to light the lamp of wisdom.

Hitherto, Vedic philosophy was chanted or recited only in Sanskrit. Poigai Alwar paved the way for others to recite and write Vedic philosophy (hymns) in Tamil. Poigai Alwar was able to communicate the essence of Vaishnavism even to the common man by presenting his *pasurams* with simplicity and clarity in Tamil. Thus he set the trend of writing *pasurams* in Tamil among the other Alwars. Since the originator of the Divyaprabandham, Poigai Alwar, was born at Kanchi, it is no exaggeration to say that Vaishnavism also originated at Kanchipuram. An interesting anecdote which is believed to have taken place at Kanchi depicts the greatness of Tamil where even the Almighty expresses his strong love for Tamil.

Thirumizhai Alwar, the fourth among the Alwars, lived at Thiruvekka in Kanchi with his disciple Kanikannan. Hearing about the greatness of Kanikannan and his ability to compose songs in Tamil, the king requested him to sing a song in his praise. Kanikannan refused to sing in praise of any human being. The angered king ordered Kanikannan to be banished or sent into exile. A visibly upset Thirumizhai Alwar decided to leave with his disciple. In a disturbed mood he sings thus:

Kanikannan poginran kamarupoonguchchi

Manivanna neekidakka venda - thunivudaya

Sennapulavanum poginran, neeyumunren

Painagappai surutty kol.

Thirumizhai Alwar's word was law for the Almighty, for he also left, plunging the whole city into darkness. Realising his mistake, the king ran behind Thirumizhai Alwar and requested both him and his disciple to return to the city. Thirumizhai Alwar beseeched the Almighty to return to the city as he and his disciple had been called back.

Kanikannan pokhozhinthan kamarupoongucchi

Manivanna neekidakka vendum - thunivudaya

Sennapulavanum pokozhinthen neeyumutren

Painagappai viruthu kol.

He also entreated the Almighty to open his hood. The Almighty obliged his ardent devotee. To make his devotees aware that he always pays heed to their pleas, he reversed his sleeping posture. In every Vaishnavite temple the Lord is usually seen reclining with his head on the left and his feet on the right. But in Thiruvekka, he has his head on the right and his feet on the left. As he fulfilled the desire of his devotee he is also known as *Chonna Vannam Seitha Perumal* and *Yadhokhthakari* and this name has come to stay.

To this day, in all the Vaishnavite temples, *pasurams* are first chanted in Tamil and then the Sanskrit *shlokas* are sung. Kumaraguruparan says that Sanskrit *shlokas* were literally weeping for the God's preference for the *pasurams*.

The temples which have been described in song by the *Alwars* are considered sacred, and there are 14 such sacred temples in Kanchi alone. No other city has such a great honour.

A *pasuram* describing all the sacred temples in Kanchi by Thirumangai Alwar is as follows:

Neeragathai, neduvarayinuchchi melai,

Nilathingal thundaththai, nirainthakachchi

Uhooragathai, onthuraineervehhaullai,

Ulluvarullaththai, ulagamethum

Karagathai, karvanathullathai, kalva,

Kamarupoongaviriyin thenpalmannu

Peragathai, perathennanjinullai,

Perumanun thiruvadiye panine.

(Thirunedunthandagam - 8)

After the period of the *Alwars*, the person who brought immense popularity or fame was Shri Ramanuja who was also born in Kanchi district.

Alavanthar, the Vaishnavite *acharya*, was terribly depressed as there was no capable person to take over the Vaishnavite *math* after him. During this period Ramanuja, who was born at Sriperambatur near Kanchi, was undergoing his *Shri katha* at Kanchi. Hearing about the greatness of Ramanuja, Alavandar studied him from a distance and went back fully convinced that Ramanuja was the ideal choice to head the *peetham*. Thus, Kanchi produced another great Vaishnavite stalwart, Shri Ramanujar.

Pillai Lokacharya, another great Vaishnava *acharya*, has compiled and edited the Vaishnavite traditions into eighteen books.It is also believed that Pillai Lokacharya was an incarnation of Vishnu (Varadharaja).

The great Vedanta Desikar was another jewel in Kanchi's crown and he was able to win over other religious heads by his intelligent arguments. He has also written more than 100 texts. Prativati Bhayangaram Annan, disciple of Nayana Varadacharya (son of Vedanta Desikar) and later also a disciple of Manavala Mamunigal, was also born in Kanchi. He composed the popular *Venkatesha Suprabhatham*, *Prapattulai* and *Mangalam*.

Kanchi not only gave birth to great Vaishnavite saints but also some of the greatest religious texts were also compiled here.

The Dravida Veda Sagaram, also known as Thiruvaymozhi, was summarized by Nambi Pillai and was edited by his disciple Thiruveedi Pillai. But, for reasons unknown, it was kept incognito. Nearly one hundred years later, this book was published as Yatindara Vaishnava Prabhavam at Kanchi. This text is also known as Eedu 36,000 padi.

The Brahma sutras composed in Sanskrit are considered the eyes of the Vishishta vaida madam. Shri Bhashyam is a summary of this text by Shri Ramanuja. This was passed on to Nadudurammal and was compiled into a text by Sudarshanacharya, disciple of Shri Ramanuja. This text, popularly known as Kritakaprakashika, also originated at Kanchi. The above two texts are, to this day, known as the two eyes of Kanchi.

The above historical events have been compiled and presented by Pillai Lokam Shri who also hailed from Kanchi.

Last, but not the least, Prativati Bhayankaram Annangaracharya Swamy was also a native of Kanchi. He has, to his credit, more than 1000 religious texts which have been written and published by him. A doyen of the Vaishnava religion, this mahavidwan is the recepient of the President's award. His birth centenary has recently been celebrated all over Tamilnadu.

To sum up, Kanchi has produced a stream of stalwarts from Poigai alwar to Annangaracharya, and their literary contribution to Vaishnavism is unparalleled.

BUDDHISM IN KANCHIPURAM

by

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Buddhism was one of the religions which set itself against Vedic sacrifices. Mahavira, Buddha and Makkali Gosala who established Jainism, Buddhism and Ajivikism respectively, in India, were contemporaries and were known as the founders of non-Vedic religions. They gave importance to asceticism (*shramanas*) and advocated a life of retirement in the forest, spending most of their time in philosophical speculation. Buddha preached *Ahimsa* and kindness to all living beings and tried to eradicate all claims to superiority on the grounds of birth.

Buddha had to struggle hard and try various methods of penances to attain enlightenment. After attaining enlightenment, he had two disciples who were merchants called Tapura and Bhallika[1]. The next convert was the son of a very rich merchant called Yasa, to whom Buddha taught the merit of gifts (*danakatham*), the practice of precepts (*silakatham*), the means of attaining heavenly existence (*saggakatham*) and the evils of enjoying earthly pleasures (*kamanama dinavam samkilesam*). Yasa converted 54 friends of his who became Buddhist monks. Following this, 1000 Jatilas[2], who were originally Brahmana hermits, were converted by Buddha at Uruvela. When king Bimbisara offered him a garden outside Rajagriha, the number of followers increased and, eventually, Buddha was able to establish a religious order called *Sangha* which even today is worshipped by practising Buddhists in their *Trisharana:*

Buddham sharanam gachchhami
Dhammam sharanam gachchhami
Sangham sharanam gachchhami

Although in the beginning, Buddha resisted the intake of women in the *sangha,* he later admitted women from all walks of life. In the initial stage the monks had little connection with lay society. But later, with the support and respect given by kings and nobles, they received alms and other necessities for their monastic life. In return, they taught lay men lessons in *dhamma.*

After the *nirvana* of the Buddha, King Ashoka, who embraced Buddhism, organised a missionary movement and saw that Buddhism was widespread, both inside and outside India. Buddha's middle path, i.e., neither severe austerities nor a life of luxury, gained popularity among the people.

When did Buddhism, which gained so much popularity in North India, come to the south? History does not provide any definite date on which Buddhism was

brought to the south of India. But there are references to show that Buddhism was known in South India during the time of the Tamil works, *Maduraikkanchi*[3], *Silappadikaram*[4] and *Manimekalai*[5]. From one of the Ashokan edicts - the one on a rock at the foot of Mount Girnar near Junagadh - one comes to know that King Ashoka had established medical centres in the Chola and Pandya territories, in Satyaputra and Kerala. In another rock edict of Ashoka (258 B.C) found near the city of Bhishawar, it is said that Ashoka had won his victory of *dhamma* in the south, in the Chola, Pandya and Tamaraparani areas.

In the south of India, from historic times, Kanchipuram enjoyed the position of one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage in the country. All the main religions, mainly Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism, flourished here and enjoyed royal patronage at one time or another.

One could consider the Talaing records as the earliest Buddhist reference to Kanchipuram. These records, which date back to the 4th century B.C., are written in characters which are almost identical with the Dravidian *Vengi* alphabet of the same period[6]. Buddhist connections with Kanchipuram are known to us today from literature, archaeological evidences and references made by foreign travellers.

Literature

A number of Pali texts mention Kanchi as one of the Buddhist centres in the south. The Tamil Buddhist epic, *Manimekalai*, written by Eattanar often mentions Kanru (Kacci), a place where Buddhism was nurtured by Buddhist missionaries. Manimekalai, the daughter of Madhavi and Kovalan, renounces the world on the death of Kovalan, who was killed by the Pandya king on a fictitious complaint made by a goldsmith. After the death of Kovalan, Madhavi also renounces the world and embraces Buddhism. Manimekalai, after travelling to several countries and listening to various other systems of philosophy, comes to Kanchi to listen to the sermon of Aravana Adigal, a Buddhist monk[7] The meeting of Aravana Adigal and Manimekalai had been already predicted by an idol on a pillar called *Kantirpavai*[8]. Manimekalai had also been told by the same idol about her meeting with her grandfather, Machattuvan, the father of Kovalan, who took to Buddhism after the death of his son Kovalan, and the meeting with her mother Madhavi.[9] The 28th Chapter of the text *Kacci managar pukka kathai* (entering the City of Kacci), narrates how Manimekalai visited Aravana Adigal in Kanchi and listened to Buddhist religious doctrines.

Kanchipuram, before her visit, was dry and was facing a severe famine. Manimekalai, coming from Vanji, was travelling through the air and landed in the heart of the city. She first went to the Buddhist temple built by Ilarikilli, the brother of Thotukalarkilli. When the king of the city was informed of her visit, he came and paid his respects to her. He also told her how he was informed

of her visit to his country by a deity. He further told her about the wish of the deity, that he build a pond and a grove:

"Poykaiyum pozhilum punaimin endraraintat
teyvatam poyapin cheyti yamamaittatu

She visited this grove and found that it resembled Manipallavam to which she had been first taken by Goddess Manimekalai and where she realised the details of her previous birth. Manimekalai made the king build a *putta pitikai* on which the two feet of the Buddha are laid, and also two temples for the Goddess Manimekalai and Thipathilakai. She made the king pay his respects and perform festivals. She, with the help of *Amudhasurabhi*, a bowl which is always filled with food and never becomes empty, fed the people of the country who were dying of starvation due to the famine ravaging the place.

She was visited in her *dharmashala* by Aravana Adigal, the Buddhist monk, her mother Madhavi and her companion. Aravana Adigal preached the Buddhist doctrine to Manimekalai, as well as other systems of philosophy existing in his time. After listening to his discourses, she became an ascetic to get out of the cycle of birth and death.

Is Aravana Adigal, the teacher of Manimekalai, a historical figure or a mythological character? Some scholars identify him with Dharmapala (6th century A.D), as the name Aravana Adigal appears to be a Tamil translation of Dharmapala. M. Raghava Iyengar connects the place Arappanancheri in Kanchipuram with Aravana Adigal. He suggests that Arappanancheri has come from *Aravanancheri* [10] where Aravana Adigal would have lived in Kanchi. Arappanancheri is situated near the temple street of Kamakshi Amman *kovil* in Kanchipuram. In the absence of other evidences to corroborate the above name, one cannot come to a definite conclusion. But the information one gets from *Manimekalai* points to the fact that there were Buddhist activities in Kanchipuram.

Though with the available evidence one is not able to come to a definite conclusion about the identification of Aravana Adigal with Dharmapala, it is known that a Buddhist scholar by the name Dharmapala seemed to have lived in Kanchipuram. Dharmapala, who was a son of a high official in Kanchi, fled to a Buddhist monastry near Kanchi and was ordained by Bhavaviveka. He eventually went to the University of Nalanda and became the chief there. His works on the etymology, logic and metaphysics of Buddhism were well received. He was also known as the Dharmapala Phusa i.e, Dharmapala Bodhisattva, among scholars.

In the epic *Manimekalai*, the character Manimekalai is named after the deity of the same name who was supposed to have saved one of her forefathers [11] during a voyage when his ship was wrecked at sea. This account occurs also in the *Silappadikaram*[12]. The deity Manimekalai is said to roam the seas for the

purpose of protecting seafarers, being thus ordained by Indra. The references to this deity are also found in the *Sanghajataka*[13], and the *Mahajana Jataka.*[14] Sylvan Levi,[15] who has made a study of these legends, is of the opinion that the legend of the goddess Manimekalai may have originated around the cities of Puhar and Kanchi. (There exists a temple dedicated to the goddess Annapurna in Kanchipuram even now). These legends might have been incorporated at a later date into the *Jataka* stories which were mentioned above.

Buddhist Scholars of Kanchipuram

Dignaga

Apart from Dharmapala, there existed another great scholar by name Acharya Dignaga /Dinnaga who hailed from Simhavakra, (probably Singaperumalkoil of Kanchipuram). Mylai Chinni Venkatachami Nattar identifies Simhavakra as Chiyamarikalam in Chengalpattu district. Dignaga, who had his education under Vasubandhu (420 - 500 A.D.), was a great scholar in Buddhist philosophy and logic. He is considered to be "the father of the medieval *Nyaya* or a link between the Buddhist and orthodox *Nyaya* systems of India" [16]. He is connected to Bhavaviveka by Hiuen Tsang in his travelogue[17]. His works, the *Pramanasamuchchhaya,* the *Nyayapravesha,* the *Hetuchakra - damaru*, the *Pramana- shastranyaya* and the *Alambanapariksha* are very popular among learned Buddhists of India and abroad, mainly in China and Japan. There exists a close resemblance between the *Nyayapravesha* of Dignaga and the Buddhist logic expounded in the *Charnayakkanakkar Tantiraiketta Kathai* of *Manimekalai* [18]. He belonged earlier to the *Vatriputriya* sect of *Hinayanism* and later embraced the *Mahayana* school, due to the differences he had with his teacher. He wrote many treatises on logic and many of them were translated into Tibetan or Chinese. He travelled from Kanchi to many other places in India like Orissa (Odivisa), Maharashtra (Maharattha) and Nalanda. In Nalanda he outwitted a logician called Sudurjaya, and the learned scholars of Nalanda conferred the title *Tarka Pungava* on him.

Boddhidharma

Apart from Dharmapala and Dignaga, there seems to have been another renowned Buddhist scholar from Kanchi by the name Boddhidharma who lived in the 6th century A.D. There are different opinions about the origin and life of Boddhidharma. Beal observes that Boddhidharma, a man of the Turkhara country, of great bodily size and strength, came to China and became a priest. He wandered through the nine provinces as a religious mendicant. On his visit again to India to adore the sacred vestiges, I-tsing met him at Nalanda. When he was about 50 years old he died in North India.[19]

Contrary to what Beal says, Yamakami Sogen is of the opinion that Boddhidharma was the third son of a king of Kanchi. Meenakshi also confirms this opinion with the accounts of Suzuki and Charles Elliot, [20] "that there is no

doubt Boddhidharma was a South Indian and a prince of the Pallava family". Shu Hikosaka in his work *Buddhism in Tamilnadu*, says that Boddhidharma's doctrine is the philosophy of Sunyata of *Mahayana* Buddhism. He also adds that "if we accept the tradition according to which Aryadeva, a direct successor of Nagarjuna, lived near Kanchi in his last years, we could reasonably infer that Boddhidharma's basic doctrine of *Madhyamika* philosophy was cultivated at Kanchi"[21].

Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosha

Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosha, who were supposed to have lived during the 5th century A.D., mention Kanchi in their works. Buddhadatta, who was patronised by Achyuta Vikranta, a Kalabhra king, has composed *Vinayavinichchaya, Buddhavamsattagatha, Anagata-vamsha* and a commentary on *Buddhavamsha Abhidammavatara.*

Buddhaghosha, who belonged to Magadha, in the colophon to his work *Manoratha purani*, a commentary on the *Anguttara Nikaya*, mentions Kanchi as a centre of Pali. Buddhist scholars like K.R.Srinivasan[22] identify Buddhaghosha as a native of Kanchi, from the reference found in the colophon discovered in Visuddhimagga. In this colophon, there is a reference to Morandakhetaka as his native place. C.R.Srinivasan tries to identify Morandakhetaka as Moranam near Kanchi in North Arcot district.

Vajrabodhi

Vajrabodhi, (A.D. 661-730), the son of the preceptor of the king of Kanchi and a contemporary of Pallava Narasimhavarman II, was a native of Kanchi and travelled to China. He is said to have translated many Buddhist works into Chinese.

Siddha Nagarjuna

Siddha Nagarjuna, (7th century A.D.), who was considered to be one of the eightyfour *siddhas*, was born at Kahora, a part of Kanchi, according to Tibetan tradition. He has written *sadhanas* and *tantras* and also propagated *siddhis* (occult sciences), which formed the syllabi of Tantric Buddhism. It is said that he attained this state of excellence by the grace of the goddess Tara of Kanchi. It is also worth considering here the opinion of T.A.Gopinatha Rao who says that Kamakshi was originally the goddess Taradevi of the Buddhist pantheon[23].

Amrudha, Buddhatiya

Amrudha (12th century A.D) of the Pandya country, is known to have headed the *mulasomavihara* of Kanchi. There are also references to another Buddhist scholar named Buddhatiya of Sadvihara of Kanchi who composed *bhogavali* (laudatory poems) on the Javanese king, Hayam Wuruk. This, and the seated figure of Buddha (11th century) in *padmasana* found in Kanchi, which bear

close resemblance to Javanese types, point to the interaction between Kanchi and Java.

Among the kings, the early Pallavas of Kanchi supported Buddhism and some of the kings also used the name 'Buddha' along with their proper names. *Buddhavarman* and *Buddhyanikara* are examples of this trait[24].

Notes of foreign travellers

The following remarks made by the Chinese traveller, Yuan Chwang, helps us to a certain extent to know about the Buddhist activities in and around Kanchipuram.

"The region had a rich fertile soil; it abounded in fruits and flowers and yielded precious substances. The people were courageous, thoroughly trustworthy and public spirited, and they esteemed great learning in their written and spoken languages. They differed from Mid-India. There were more than 100 Buddhist monasteries with above 10,000 brethren, all of the *Sthavira* school. The *Deva* temples were 80, and the majority belonged to the *Digambaras*. This country had been frequently visited by the Buddha, and King Ashoka had erected *topes* at the various spots where the Buddha had preached and admitted members into his order. The capital [Kanchipura of the Ta-lo-pi-tu or Dravida country] was the birth place of Dharmapala Risa. He was a professor of Nalanda.

...... Not far from the south of the capital was a large monastry which was the *rendezvous* of the most eminent men of the country. It had an Ashoka *tope* above 100 feet high, where the Buddha had once defeated the *Tirthankaras* by preaching and had received many into his communion. Near it were traces of a sitting place and exercise - walk of the four past Buddhas".

The above reference of Yuan Chwang is, as Gopinatha Rao says [25], to a great extent in agreement with the descriptions found in *Manimekalai*. Even in the 14th century A.D, Kanchipuram seemed to have had Buddhist activities. An inscription found in Korea mentions an Indian monk called Dhyanabhadra, who had visited Kanchipuram and listened to a discourse on the *Avatamsaka sutra* in the 14th century A.D. [26].

Sculptural evidence

The existence of Buddhism in Kanchipuram is further corroborated by the five images of Buddha found in and around Kamakshidevi temple of Kanchipuram. There is one image of Buddha found right in the first *prakara* of the Kamakshi temple. This is 7 feet in height and has a pedestal which is 10 inches in height. Both hands are broken today. The folds of the flowing robes are exquisitely worked out. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, who has studied Buddha vestiges, poses the question, 'Why is a Buddha image in the Kamakshi temple?' After examining the situation, he has come to the conclusion that this temple would have been originally a temple of Taradevi and later converted to a Hindu temple [27].

There are also two other Buddha images in the Kamakshi temple, one without a head in the second *prakara* of the temple and the other in the garden of the Kamakshi temple. Both hands of the first image lie on its lap in the *yoga mudra* pose. The second image is seated in a *yoga* attitude with the hands in the *yoga mudra* pose (plate 21). Gopinatha Rao is of the opinion that there should be two more large images buried in the garden.

Apart from the above mentioned three images, there are also two others in the Karukkil-amarnta-amman temple which is situated on the way to Vishnu Kanchipuram. The hand of one of the images is in the *bhu-sparsha-mudra* (plate 22). Both the hands of the other image are in the *yoga mudra* pose.

There are also Buddha images in the Ekambreshvara temple in Kanchipuram. C.Meenakshi, who had made a study of all the available Buddhist vestiges in Kanchi, is of the opinion that there should have been more than one Buddhist *vihara* in Kanchipuram. From the reference found in *Nagarakritagama* and other evidences, she has tried to identify *the shadviharas* (six monastries) in Kanchi. She has also explained, with evidence, that Buddhists were living in Kanchi upto the 14th century A.D.[29]

Though Buddhism was popular in Kanchipuram, it could not gain a firm hold like Jainism. Jainas and Hindus were always against Buddhists and they took all steps to drive them away from Kanchipuram. The great Hindu Vedanta philosopher, Shankaracharya, after vehement religious debates, drove many Buddhists away. Likewise, the Jaina monk, Akalavika, also had religious disputes with Buddhists in front of the king, Hemasital of Kanchi, and eventually drove them away.

The *Mattavilasa Prahasana* [30], a Sanskrit drama written by the Pallava king, Mahendra Vikrama (580 - 630 A.D), depicts the downfall of Buddhism through the character of a Buddhist monk. The mockery made by the *Kapalin* and his wench of the Buddhist monk depicts the feeble hold of Buddhists on society, though they were rich. The following comment by the character Devasoma on the Buddhist monk portrays that Buddhists though rich, were immoral:

Esanararekaviharasamadhigatavinasancayo
yathakammadhikaranakaranikanam
mukhani purayitum parayati

(Why, this man with an abundance of wealth accrued from several monasteries could fill the mouths of court officials as he pleases).

The decline of Buddhism in Kanchipuram in particular and in Tamilnadu in general could be due to many reasons. Insufficient royal patronage, Jaina and Brahmanical persecution, Muslim invasion, internal corruption among the monks, many divisions and sectarianism, and insufficient support from the common man could be the main reasons[32].

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JAINISM IN KANCHIPURAM

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The history of Jainism in Kanchi may be traced back to the Pallava period, even though Thondaimandalam witnessed the spread of the religion in the early centuries of the Christian era. Kanchi became a stronghold of the Jains in the medieval period and continued to be so for several centuries. A regular colony of the Jains came into existence at the place locally known as Jinakanchi on the southern bank of the river Vegavati. It is also known as Thirupparuttikunram and is considered to be one of the important centres of learning of the *Digambara* Jains.

The Pallavas of Kanchi were liberal in their religious outlook and some of them extended patronage to Jainism. Simhavarman made a grant of the village Amanserkkai and some lands in Tamar to the reputed monk Vajranandi of Thirupparuttikunram for conducting worship of Lord Jina.[1] Mahendravarman I is believed to have been an adherent of the Jaina faith in the early part of his life, but he was brought back to Shaivism by saint Thirunavukkarasar. The *Periyapuranam*, while dealing with the life story of Thirunavukkarasar, speaks about the conversion of a Pallava king who is generally identified with Mahendravarman. Moreover, he is stated to have destroyed the Jaina monastery at Thirupatiripuliyur (near Cuddalore) and out of its ruins built a Shiva temple, Gunabhara Ishvaram, at Thiruvatigai [2]. Although opinions are divergent about the historicity of the *Periyapuranam* account, scholars unanimously accept that Mahendravarman was for sometime a Jaina and later became a Shaivaite [3]. Whatever element of truth may be there in the above version, no Jaina vestige of the Mahendra period do we find in Kanchi or in any other part of his dominion. However, Mahendra makes a mention of the Jains of Kanchi in his satirical work, the *Mattavilasaprahasana*. He ridicules the degenerate nature of the *Kapalikas*, *Pasupatas* and the Buddhist monks. The drunken *Kapalika* mendicant in the play is warned not to speak of the *Kapalika* means of salvation publicly in the town, for the Jains describe the way to salvation differently, thus alluding indirectly to the *Jaina* custom of non-eating of meat and abstinence from liquor.

Temples

There are two *Jaina* temples at Thirupparuttikunram, one dedicated to Vardhamana Mahavira, the twentythird *Tirthankara* (plate 23), and the other to Chandraprabha, the eighth *Tirthankara* (plate 24). Both the temples date from the Pallava period, but they no longer exhibit the Pallava style of architecture. The Vardhamana temple was considerably enlarged with additional shrines and a huge pillared hall added in later times. One of the shrines built in the Chola period is dedicated to Dharmadevi. Together with

the shrines built in the Chola period, the entire temple complex came to be called *Trikodabasti.*

The *sangeetha mandapa* in the temple complex was built in 1387-88 A.D. by Irugappa, the famous general of the Vijayanagar king, Bukka II [4]. The temple was enclosed by a *prakara* wall by one Alagiyapallavan, who is identified with the Kadava chieftain, Kopperunjinga [5]. The ceiling of the *mandapa* contained two layers of paintings, one executed during the Vijayanagara rule, the other in the Nayak times. The earlier paintings have disappeared due to the ravages of time. The Nayak paintings depict incidents connected with the life of Rishabhanatha, Neminatha, Mahavira and Dharmadevi. The *balalilas* of Krishna, such as the lifting of the Govardhana hill, *Kaliyamardhana*, the killing of of the elephant *asura*, fighting the wrestlers, killing Kamsa, etc., deserve special mention. Short label inscriptions in Tamil narrating these events are found below the paintings [6].

The Chandraprabha temple is of modest proportions and is said to have been built by Rajasimha Pallava. It has a shrine and a small *mandapa* in front. The shrine was, at a later period, closed for reasons unknown to us, but the first *tala* was converted into a shrine accomodating an image of Chandranatha. Subsequent renovations and repairs have altered the original style of its architecture and it now resembles a modern structure [7]. However, the rampant *yalis* at the cordinals of the shrine are reminiscent of the Rajasimha style of architecture.

Besides the above two temples, yet another is known to have existed in the vicinity of Kanchipuram. It was known as Mahilampalli. An epigraphical record of Narasimha Pallava II (708-709 A.D), re-engraved in the 9th century A.D., states that queen Lokamahadevi was affected by a *Brahmarakshasa* and mentions an *Acharya* of Mahilampalli. The *Acharya* probably had some part in alleviating the queen's affliction from the evil spirit. It also seems to register a gift of land to the temple of *Arhat* [8]. The Mahilampalli of the epigraph does not exist now. It is not possible to locate this Jaina temple, as the fragmentary inscription referring to it is engraved on a loose slab lying in the lumber room of the Kamakshi temple.

Landgrants and other endowments

The Jaina institutions of Kanchi received the patronage of the members of the ruling families and the pious devotees. The earliest epigraphical record referring to the Jaina settlement at Thirupparuttikunram is the famous Pallankoil copper plate issued by the Pallava king, Simhavarman (556 A.D). It records that the king granted the village Sramanasrama alias Amanserkai in Perunagar and some lands in Tamar as *Pallichchandam* to the reputed *Jaina* monk Vajranandi of *Nandisangha* at Vardhamaneshvara *tirtha* for conducting the worship of Lord Jina. The copper plate describes Paruttikunru as the

Dharma-tirtha or sacred place of Lord Vardhamana[9]. Perunagar and Tamar (Damal) are two important places retaining their ancient names even to the present day in the Kanchipuram taluk. Amanserkai cannot be definitely identified since there are several villages with names like Amanantangal, Amanambakkam, etc.[10]. There was a monastic order at Jinakanchi named *Nandi sangha*, in which lived a horde of virtuous teachers, one of whom was Vajranandi, who was well-versed in all sacred lore.

It is evident from the Pallankoil copper plate that the Vardhamana temple at Tirupparuttikunram was considered a holy place for the Jains as early as the 6th century A.D. The reference to the *Nandi sangha* and the hermitage is of great importance. The *Jaina* recluses formed themselves into various *sanghas* for the propagation of their religious principles. Four types of such orders, viz., *Nandi sangha, Sena sangha, Deva sangha* and *Simha sangha*, are mentioned among the *Digambara* Jains of the south. Among them, the *Nandi sangha* seems to have been very popular in Tamilnadu. The presiding monk of the order had his name suffixed with the epithet *Nandi*. Lithic records from Thirupparuttikunram bear testimony to the fact that the *Nandi sangha* continued to be there for a long time under the succession of several *Jaina acharyas* [11].

During the reign of Kulottunga Chola I (1116 A.D), 3000 *kuli* of land were purchased from the assembly of Kaitaduppur by the monks of Thirupparuttikunram for digging a channel for irrigational purposes[12]. In the year 1131 A.D., some lands were sold to the temple by the assembly of Vilasar[13]. A similar grant of *Pallichandam* was also made to the temple and it was entrusted to one Arambanandi in 1135 A.D[14]. Twenty *veli* of land in the village Ambai were endowed at the instance of Kulottunga Cholakaduvetti, for the merit of his preceptor Chandrakirtidevar and on the *bhattars* of Thirupparuttikunram[15]. Endowments such as the gift of the village Kanipakkam as *pallichchandam* to God Semporkunralvar (Mahavira) at Paruttikunram and the assignment of income from the tax *kadamai* for food offerings had been made during the reign of Rajaraja III [16].

The same temple was also patronised by Vijayanagar rulers like Bukka II and Krishnadevaraya. At the instance of Irugappa, the minister of Bukka, the village Mahendramangalam was gifted to God Trailokyavallabhar, and provisions had been made for the repairs of the temple and the construction of a *mandapa*[17]. The *mandapa* was built by the minister at the instance of his preceptor, Pushpasena, for holding musical concerts and was paved with granite slabs. The records of Krishnadevaraya register the transfer of the village Kotugai belonging to the Jain temple in lieu of another known as Uvachcheri for the benefit of the residents of the Tirumalai Devi *agrahara*[18]. Besides, a sale of some land and house sites was made by the *gurukkal* and the *tanattar* of the temple to one Harihara *gurukkal* of Kanchipuram[19].

Later inscriptions found in the temple register the grant of 2000 *kuli* of land as *sarvamanya* for conducting regular worship in the Trailokyanatha temple [20]. The *gopura* of the temple was constructed in the 14th century A.D. by the sage Shri Pushpasena Vamanacharya who was the disciple of Mallisena Vamanasuri[21]. Salutations are paid to these two sages of the Jaina order in a lithic record[22]

The Chandraprabha temple does not contain any epigraphical document registering benefactious during the Pallava period. In the 11th century A.D., the same temple received some donations during the reign of Rajendra Chola, but their details are completely lost[23].

The kura tree

The *Sthalavriksha* of the Vardhamana temple is the *kura* tree and a verse in praise of it is engraved on a stone built into the platform of the temple. It states that the tree neither grows tall nor becomes short, protects the sceptre of the king, represents *dharma* and stands in front of the eternal abode of Trailokyanatha[24].

Jina kanchi matha and its acharyas

Jinakanchi was considered one among the four sacred *vidyasthanas* of the *Digambara* Jains. A monastic establishment presided over by a succession of reputed monks existed at this place. But it is not possible to trace the history of the *matha* and its learned pontiffs. The origin of the monastery, though shrouded in mystery, may be pushed back to the 6th century A.D., as we find mention of Vajranandi of the *Nandisangha* in whose favour land grants were made by the Pallava king, Simhavarman [25].

The *rishisamudaya* (group of monks) of Thirupparuttikunram wielded considerable influence over the administration of the temple and received land endowments during the reign of Kulottunga Chola I[26]. Chandrakirtidevar is said to be the Jaina preceptor in the last quarter of the 12th century A.D. It was for his merit and for the other monks of Jinakanchi, that one *Mandiyankilan* granted 20 *veli* of land in the village Ambai [27].

Pushpasena, the preceptor of the Vijayanagara minister Irugappa, seems to have been in charge of the monastery at Jinakanchi. He instigated the minister to build the *sangeetha mandapa* in the temple and make liberal endowments [28]. Pushpasena Vamanacharya and Mallisena Vamanasuri were two important *acharyas* who are glorified in the epigraphical records of the temple [29]. They could have headed the *matha* in the 15th century A.D.

The Mackenzie manuscript adds that the Jinakanchi *matha* at Thirupparuttikunram was once adorned by pontiffs like Samantabhadra, Shivakotiacharya, Pujyapada, Akalanka, Nishkalanka, etc., but due to the anarchy and confusion that prevailed in the country after the reign of

Krishnadevaraya, the Jinakanchi *matha* came to an end [30]. The pontifical seat was then transferred to Chittamur in South Arcot district and the Jinakanchi *matha* was re-established by Virasenacharya in the 16th century A.D. Even to the present day, the official pontiff of the *Jaina* sect in Tamilnadu functions from the Jina Kanchi *matha* at Chittamur [31].

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THE ART HERITAGE OF KANCHI

by

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Kanchipuram has carved out for itself a unique place in the art history of India. There may be a hundred temples or even more for various deities built in different periods and it is impossible to describe them all here. Here, the attention is focussed on a few selected ones which are considered landmarks in the history of temple architecture in South India.

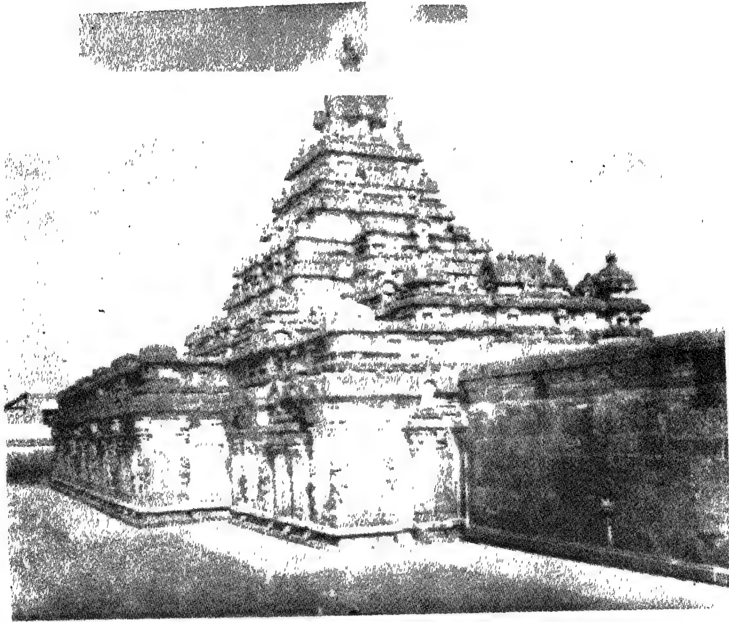
In this city we see some of the earliest structural temples and finest sculptures of Tamilnadu. They range from the Sangam age to the modern times and possess exquisite gems belonging to the Pallava, Chola, Vijayanagara and later periods. In their religious affiliation they belong to the Shaiva, Vaishnava, Buddhist and Jaina faiths, since all of them had flourished here with varying amounts of popularity and patronage.

In the Sangam work *Perumpanatrupadai*, the author Rudrankannanar (second century A.D.), gives an excellent description of Kanchi as a fortified city full of groves and gardens, mansions and religious establishments, where many gathered to worship and celebrate colourful festivals. It also speaks about the noble virtues of Ilan Tiraiyan, the ruler of Kanchi, and his palace. It also mentions the temple of Vehka (now called Tiruvehkarai).

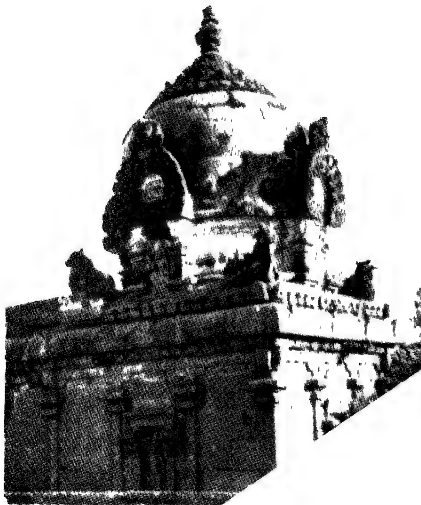
The huge reclining deity of this temple is still in stucco and thus retains its pre-Pallava character like the reclining god Ranganatha of Srirangam. Similarly, there are two other Vishnu temples in Kanchi which have very huge deities in stucco in Uragam (or Ulagalanda Perumal Temple) (plate 15) and Padagam (Pandava-tuthar temple). The former is in the central web of Periya-Kanchi which was the nucleus of the city. Appropriately, it has a tall, nearly 30 foot high standing figure of Trivikrama. Similarly, the temple of Padagam houses a 25-feet tall and, huge stucco figure of a seated Vishnu. All three of them seem to retain the characteristics of the pre-Pallava period when brick structures and stucco figures were the order of the day. The main deity of Lord Varadaraja or Arulala Perumal was also originally of wood from the fig tree (*athi* or *audumbara* tree), but it was replaced by stone in later times.

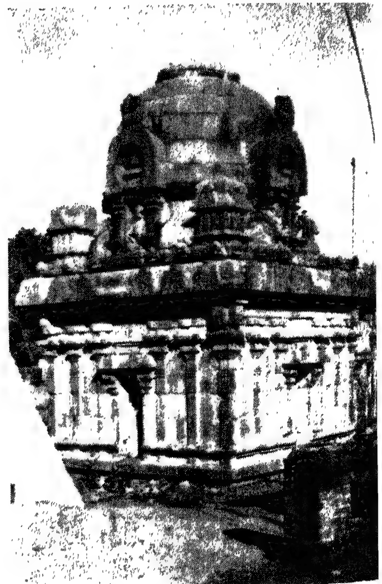
Pallava Temples of Kanchi

The Pallavas, who made Kanchi their capital, beautified the city with many exquisite temples. Their rule coincided with the *Bhakti* movement of the *Alwars* and *Nayanmars* and this gave further momentum to their temple-building activity. All the three *Shaiva Nayanmars*, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar (7th and 8th centuries), have sung in praise of temples like Ekambareshwara, Kachishwara, Kamakshi temple (or Kamakottam), Kachimayena and



8. Vaikuntha Perumal Temple
Pallava, 8th Century A.D.





admiration of many scholars[1] and therefore we may point out briefly its most distinguishing features.

The *vimana* over the sanctum, with its four-storeyed *Dravida-vimana*, is a very impressive structure with a number of niches on its body, each having large-sized and magnificent sculptures of different forms of Shiva like Dakshinamurthi, Bhikshatana, Lingodhbava, Nataraja, Urdhva- tandava, Tripurantaka and Harihara, besides a few others like Durga (plate 7), Shiva dancing in the *lalata-tilaka* pose to the great amazement of Uma, Brahma and Vishnu, a Pallava masterpiece, as also the panel of charming little Shiva *ganas* in different postures. The presiding deity in the sanctum is Somaskanda (plate 5), with a faceted Linga in front.

Around the sanctum is the open courtyard for circumambulation, and all along the rectangular periphery of the courtyard is the *prakara* wall which is lined with a series of small shrines, each capped by an octagonal *vimana* to form a beautiful *malika*. Perhaps no other temple has such a well-interpreted arrangement of 58 shrines containing paintings of deities like Somaskanda. The external walls of these shrines as well as the recesses between them are studded with sculptural reliefs of great beauty such as Kiratarjuniyam, Narasimha killing Hiranya (plate 6), Saptamatrikas, Gangadhara, Ravananugrahamurti, Indra-Anugrahmurti, etc. There are also large-sized and beautiful sculptures of Lakshmi, Sarasvathi, Durga, Jyeshta, Ekadasha Rudra, and Dwadasha Aditya in other parts of the temple to make it a unique assemblage of Hindu iconography. The shrines for Brahma and Vishnu are placed on either side of the central shrine of Shiva to form the trinity.

Undoubtedly, this temple was the most ambitious undertaking of the Pallavas, wherein the emerging architectural forms and iconographic richness are well articulated. The other Shiva temples of the Pallava period mentioned above are considerably smaller in their lay-out and size, having only smaller *vimanas* and fewer sculptures. They are not complexes but isolated temples, mostly with a small sanctum, a *ardhamandapa* and a *mukha-mandapa*. But they do carry on the Pallava style of pillars, corbels and sculpture. We also see all the three types of *vimanas* - *Nagara* (Iravataneshvara), circular or *Vesara* (Mukteshvara and Matangeshvara) and octogonal or *Dravida* (Piravatana and Valishvara).

Chokkeshwara and Jvarahareshwara

Architectural activity continued to increase during the Chola and Vijayanagar periods, either by construction of new temples or shrines or *gopuras* and *mandapas*. The exquisite little Chokkeshwara temple (plate 9) is considered to be one of the finest examples of early Chola architecture, with its neatly finished *adhisthana* mouldings and the elegant *vimana*. The Jvarahareshwara temple is exceptional, as it has a *vimana* with a circular plan.

Kachishwara

The Kachishwara temple seems to have been originally a Panchayatana temple as indicated by its inscriptions. There were shrines for Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Ganesha and Durga. The Chola inscriptions (of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I) describe the temple as *anjan-sandi-ambalam* [2]. There is a shrine for Surya here and also a stone slab where some *shlokas* from the *Surya-Shatakam* are inscribed. The presence of a shrine for Vishnu (*Vinnagar Emberuman*) is also recorded in an inscription of the 13th century here (58,59/1921). There was a similar temple with five deities, Bhoganayakar, Suryadeva, Durgaiyar and Purnavishakadevar, as attested by an inscription from the Siddheshwara temple.

Ekambreshwara

The biggest and the most popular Shiva temple in Kanchi is the Ekambreshwara (plate 17), sung about by the *Thevaram* poets and also mentioned in Mahendra Varman Pallava's work, *Mattavilasa*. Appar had addressed the Lord as 'Ekamba' ie., *sthanu* or pillar of fire. Sundarar mentions Uma worshipping Shiva. It is included as one of the *Pancha-bhuta kshetras*. The temple has undergone vast structural expansion in the post-Pallava times because of the vast patronage lavished on it in the Chola and Vijayanagar periods. Like all other Pallava temples, there is an image of Somaskanda on a panel in the sanctum besides the Linga. The Valishwara shrine inside the temple near the tank still retains its Pallava character, having been built by Rajasimha. It is dedicated to Shiva as Mahakala and was probably a centre of the *Kapalika* school of Shaivism.

This temple has undergone vast structural expansions in the post Pallava times and in the Chola and Vijayanagar periods. The shrine in front of the main shrine complex on the eastern side near the entrance is a fine structure of the middle Chola period with excellent sculptures. It is known as *Kachimayanam*, and was sung about by the *Nayanmars*.

The temple witnessed further expansion and beautification during the Vijayanagara period. The most outstanding addition was the *gopura* at the entrance, a gigantic structure of considerable grandeur and good sculptural and ornamental work. It was built during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya in A.D. 1509. It is the tallest *gopura* in Kanchi, having nine storeys and is one of the most magnificent *rayagopuras* or royal towers of South India.

Kamakshi Amman Temple

The temple of the goddess Kamakshi is a leading pilgrimage centre of Kanchi and a shrine renowned throughout India (plates 13 & 14). It is considered to be one of the 51 *Shakti-pithas* of India and is known as the *Kamakoti-pitha*. It has been sung about by the Shaiva *Nayanmars*, Jyanasambandar and Sundarar.

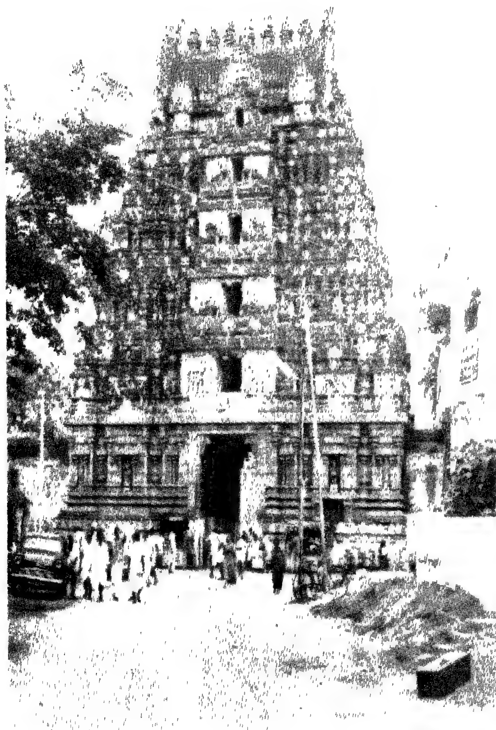


11. Trimurti

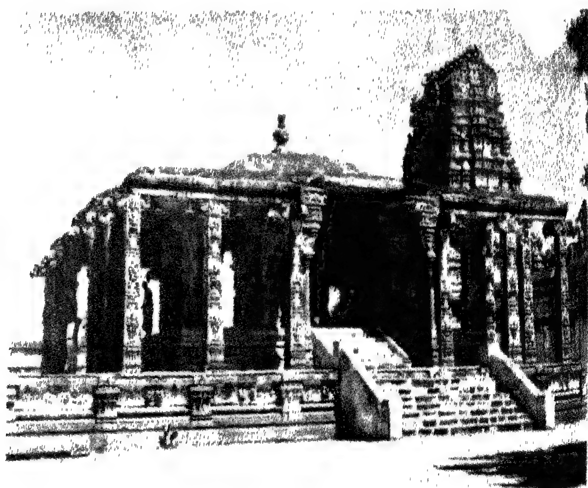
A.D.



12. Durga



13. Kamakshi Amman Templ
Gopura
Late Chola-Vijayanagara



14. Kamakshi Amman

The latter mentions it as *Kachimuthur Kamakkottam*. There are some good architectural specimens of the later Chola and Vijayanagara periods. The entrance *gopura* belongs to the former and the *kalyana mandapa* inside to the Vijayanagara period. The latter has many intersting relief sculptures depicting Puranic episodes and characters.

There are several other Shiva temples like the Punyakotishwara, Rameshwara, Kachimetrali, etc. There is a large and beautiful temple for Subrahmanya or Kumara known as *Kumarakottam*, sung about by Arunagirinatha.

Vaishnava Temples of Kanchi

As pointed out earlier, there are 14 *Divyadesas* (Vishnu temples sung about by the *Alwars*) in Kanchi. Of these, the temples of Tiruvehka, Ulagalanda Perumal and Pandava Thuthar (messenger of the Pandavas, ie., Krishna) and Attiyur (Varadaraja temple) have been praised by the early *Alwars* (Mudal-Alwar) who lived in the early Pallava period, probably the 6th century. Tiruvehka figures even in an earlier work of the *Sangam* period, *Perumpanatrupadai*. All these temples were probably made of brick earlier and later they were made *Karralis*. But the main deities inside are still in stucco and are of unusually big size. In Attiyur or Hastagiri, the image of Varadaraja was originally in wood but was replaced by a stone sculpture in the late medieval period. Therefore, these four temples represent an earlier stage in the history of temple architecture and iconography. Together, they also represent the three forms of Vishnu as envisaged by the *Alwars* - *ninran* (standing), *irundan* (sitting), and *kidandan* (reclining). The above forms apply respectively to the three temples mentioned above, Ulagalanda Perumal, Padagam and Tiruvehka. Tirumangai Alwar adds one more form, *nadandan* (walking), to describe the Trivikrama form. These three postures are repeatedly mentioned by the early *Alwars* in relation to the Kanchi temples. Tirumazhisai Alwar sings about them thus:

kunriruntha mada needu padagathum uooragathum
ninrirunthu vekkanai kidantha thennaneermaye

(Thiruchenthavirutham - 63)

ninra thenthai yooragathu iruththa thenthai padagathu
anru vekkaniak kidanthathu ennilatha munnelam
anru nan piranthilane piranthapin maranthilane
ninrathum irunthathum kidanthathum ennenjule

(Thiruchenthavirutham - 64)

The three temples mentioned above were apparently re-built and enlarged during the Chola period. Their sanctums are usually large, high and rectangular in plan to accomodate the huge figures inside. They have massive

shala-shikharas. The one in Padagam which is in stone is a magnificent edifice. The *mahamandapa* is also of the Chola period with its circular stone pillars. The shrines for the goddess (Thayar) are later additions, some belonging to the Chola period and others to the Vijayanagara period. The *gopuras* and *mandapas* in these temples were also added during the Vijayanagara period. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the great royal architect of Nandivarman Pallavamalla - Parameshwara Péruntachan - who built the Sundaravarada Perumal temple at Uttiramerur, is mentioned in an inscription as a native of Padagam. Perhaps he contributed to the temple at Padagam but, unfortunately, no inscriptions are available.

Vaikuntha Perumal Temple (Paremeshwara Vinnagaram)

Like the Kailasanatha temple, this is also an outstanding creation of the Pallavas (plate 8). Built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla, also known as Parameshwara, this temple has been described by Tirumangai Alwar in a string of ten verses (*Peria Tirumozhi* II, 10th and 9th *Tirumozhi*). He pays glowing tributes to the Pallava builders in every verse:

parmannu pallavarkon panintha parameshvara
vinnagaramathuve.

He describes Kachi (Kanchi) as a fortified city of tall and beautiful mansions .

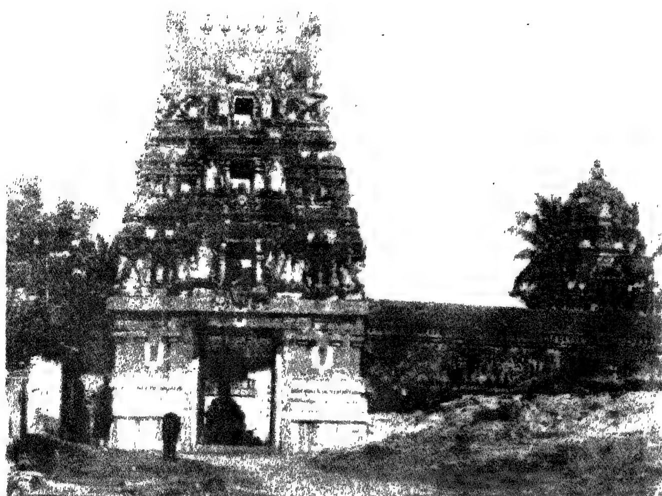
olimadangal soozhnthaya kachchi

athadanjuj zhnthaya kachchi]

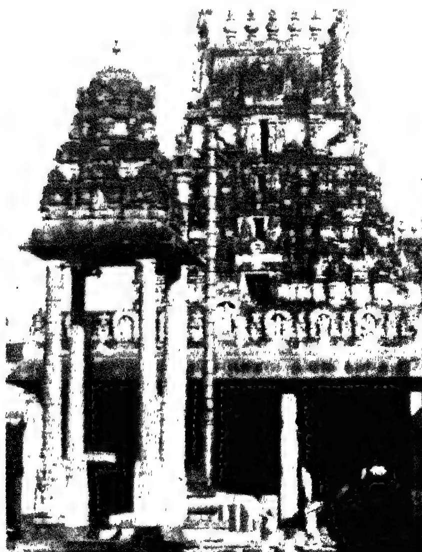
(Periya thiruvazhmozhi II, 9)

The temple has come down to us more or less undisturbed and thus remains a superb example of Pallava architecture and iconography. The temple is considered unique in its formation and plan as it has three shrines one over the other dedicated to the three forms of Vishnu: the seated form on the ground floor (*adi-tala*) the reclining on the first floor and the standing form above. In popular parlance it is called *Ashtanga-vimana*. At the ground level are two *pradakshina* passages, the inner one entered from the *antarala*, the outer by a staircase built into the second enclosing wall. It has been done by the double-walling system. All the three shrines are functional and can be circumambulated. There are only a few shrines in Tamilnadu with such architectural arrangements such as the Sundaravarada Perumal temple, Uttiramerur (Pallava), Saumya Narayana temple, Tirukkottiyur (Ramanathapuram district), and Kudal Alagar Temple, Madurai.

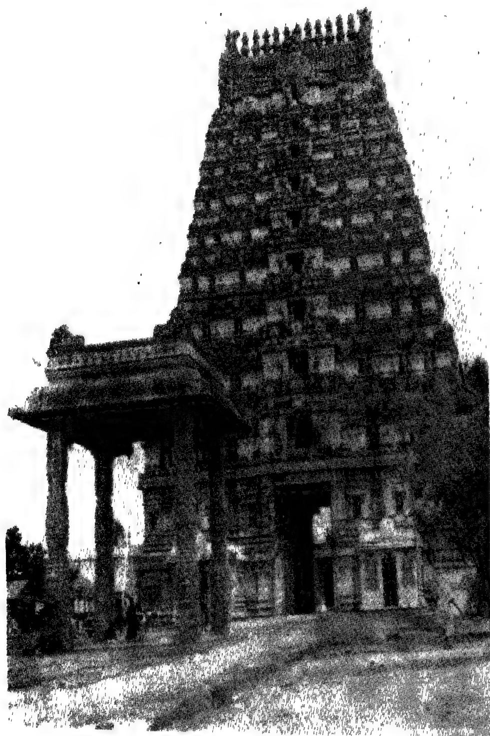
The Vaikuntha Perumal temple is also noted for its rich *Vaishnava* iconography, as depicted in the sculptures in the wall-niches of the sanctum, like Bhu-varaha, Vamana, Trivikrama, Narasimha, Kaliya *mardhana*, Nara-Narayana, Adiretha, Gajendra *varada*, *Samudra manthana*, a Mohini



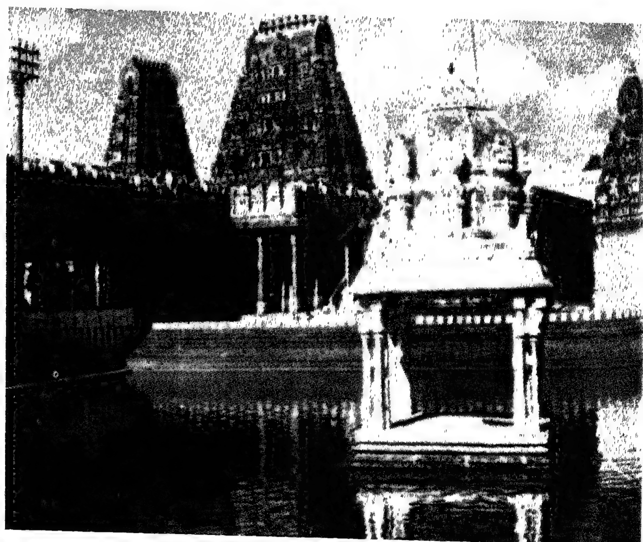
15. Ulagalanda Pe
Temple Gopura
Vijayanagara
16th Century A.D.



16. Varadaraja Perumal Temple Gopura



17. Ekambreshwara Temple Entrance Gopura
Vijayanagara, 16th Century A.D.



18. Ekambreshwara



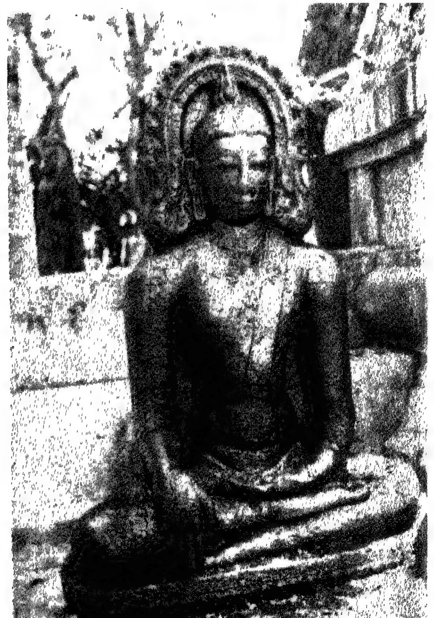
19. Stone Chain and Pillar Carvings
Varadaraja Perumal Temple
Vijayanagara, 16th Century A.D.



20. Rearing Yali
Pillar Carving



21. Buddha
Kamakshi Amman Temple
Late Chola, 11th-12th Century A.D.



22. Buddha

distributing the *amrita*, etc. Many of these iconographic forms have also been beautifully described by Tirumangai Alwar in his verses in this temple.

Another noteworthy feature of the temple is the pillared corridor with a series of secular or historical sculptures depicting the history of the Pallava dynasty upto the coronation of Nandivarman II. This has been described in detail by Dr.C.Minakshi in a monograph [3].

There are some later additions to the temple in the shrines for the Goddess, the *Alwars*, the *mahamandapa* and the outer enclosure.

Ashtabhujaperumal Temple

Another iconographic rarity found in Kanchi is the Ashtabhuja-Vishnu enshrined in an early temple described by Pey Alwar. Tirumangai has also dedicated ten verses in praise of the temple. In one of them he says that the Pallava king, Vairameghan (title of Nandivarman II), worshipped in this temple:

mannavan thondayarkon vanangum neenmudimalai vayiramagan

thanvali thanpugazh soozhntha kachchi attapuyagaraththathi thannai

(Periya thiruvazhmozhi II, 8 & 10)

Vishnu is depicted in a standing posture with eight arms holding the disc, sword, flower and arrow in his four right hands and the conch, bow, shield and the club in his left hands. It is indeed a rare iconographic form. There are shrines for Varaha and Rama also in the temple complex. The present architecture of the main temple can be ascribed to the Chola period with a few additions in the Vijayanagar times.

Varadarajaswami Temple

This is the largest and the most famous Vishnu temple in Kanchi (plate 16). This locality is now known as Vishnu Kanchi or *chinna* (small) Kanchi (from Jina Kanchi). In ancient times the place was known as Attiyur or Hastigiri and the presiding deity figures in the inscriptions at Arulala Perumal. This temple has also been described by an early *Alwar* (Bhutam) as Atthiyuran Pullurvaradhan. There are more than three hundred inscriptions in this temple, throwing a light on its history, structural development, festivals and royal patronage[4].

The unique feature of the temple is the location of the sanctum on the top of a big terrace on a hill called Hastigiri, which is reached by a flight of steps. It appears to be an architectural expression of the *Uttaravedi* concept of temples. Significantly, the deity is described as the *Uttaravedi-alagiyar.* Uttaravedi-alagiyar. The presiding deity is said to have emerged from the fire altar of the sacrifice done by Brahma. The sanctum is rectangular in plan and

has a *shala-shikhara*. It is known as *punya-koti-vimana*. The first enclosure which is on the hill is named *Vayyamaligai*, the second is called *Senaiyarkon-tirumurram* (because of the location of the shrine for Senainatha), the third is called *Yamunaituraivar - tirumurram* (because of the historic meeting of Yamunacharya with Ramanuja here) and the last is known as *Alwar - pradakshinam* because of the location of the shrines for the *Alwars* here. The outermost *prakara* has two entrances with tall *gopuras*, the one on the west datable to the 13th century A.D. and the other on the east built by Alagia Manavala Jiyar in the Vijayanagara style.

A number of shrines and *mandapas* came up during the Chola times. The shrine for Thiru-Anantalwar or Adisesha, the serpent couch of Vishnu in the human form seated in the *anjali* pose under the hood of the snake was built in A.D. 1212 by one Sivaganga. The shrine for Kariamanikka Perumal was probably built in A.D.1129 by Vikramasolan and hence it was known as *Vikrama-sola-vinnagar*. The temple kitchen was built by Naraloka Vira, the famous general and minister of Kulottunga I.

The thousand-pillared *mandapa*, built in two storeys, was constructed by the Kakatiya king, Pratapa Rudra Deva, around A.D. 1316. The *abhisheka - mandapa,* built prominently in the centre of the third *prakara,* was constructed around A.D.1236. When the Hoysala king Ballala III visited the temple in A.D.1359, he with his consorts sat on the throne named *Viravallalan* and listened to the recital of the Tamil hymns from the *Tiruvaymozhi* of Nammalvar.

Shrines for goddesses

The shrine for the principal goddess of this temple, Perundevi Thayar, was also built during the later Chola period, some time before A.D. 1236 as it is mentioned in the records of that date. The *mukha-mandapa* in front was constructed sometime around A.D. 1259 by one Vanga Kalingarayan of Kappalur whose portrait sculpture is found on the wall. The inscription describes the *mandapa* as *Vanga-Kalingarayan-tirumandapam*. The Thayar shrine was subsequently re-constructed on a larger scale sometime around A.D. 1487. The present Perundevi shrine is an elegant one displaying the exuberance of the Vijayanagara style of architecture. The *vimana* over the sanctum is known as *kalyanakoti-vimana* and was built by Kumara Tatacharya in A.D. 1614. The *mahamandapa* to the east is also a fine product of the Vijayanagara period. Here Lord Varadaraja and Perundevi are seated during the *mahanami* festival. The *mandapa* was built by Alagiya Manavala Jiyar in the 16th century. His portrait sculpture is found on a pillar.

Adjacent to the Thayar shrine is the beautiful *unjal-mandapa* located in the open courtyard called *Alagiya Manavala-tirumutram*. It was built by Alagiya Manavala Jiyar in the 16th century. The Vijayanagara royal crest is boldly

carved on it. It displays intricate chiselling and embellishment so that the whole *mandapa* resembles a fine filigree work.

There are many more beautiful *mandapas* which came up during the 16th and 17th centuries like the *vahana-mandapa*, the *tulabhara-mandapa* and the *kalyana-mandapa*. Achyutha Deva Raya performed his *mukta-tulabhara* in this temple in 1532 A.D. and, to comemmorate the occassion, a *mandapa* was built here.

The largest and the most impressive structure is the hundred-pillared *kalyana-mandapa* built in the 16th century. Standing on an exquisitely carved platform, it is supported by a closely lined colonnade of tall and highly ornamental pillars sculptured into rich and varying patterns like warriors on rearing horses, the rampant *yalis*, etc. At the entrance are the beautiful sculptures of Rathi and Manmatha mounted on the parrot and the swan respectively. There are more than a thousand relief sculptures on the pillars representing scenes from the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavatha* and other *Puranas, Dasavataras*, and other *Vaishnava* themes like the Alwars and Ramanuja, besides many dance *karanas*, motifs and royal portraits. It is indeed one of the finest examples of the *kalyana-mandapas* of the Vijayanagara period.

The Varadaraja temple is a magnificent temple complex, full of religious, historical, architectural and iconographic interest.

Other Vishnu temples

The other Vishnu temples of Kanchi which are included in the 14 *Divyadesas* are:

Dipaprakashar (or Vilakkoli Perumal) in Tuppul near Adisenpettai, sung about by Tirumangai Alwar has a standing image of Vishnu and shrines of Maragatavalli Nachiar. Being the birth-place of Vedanta Desika, there is a separate shrine for him in the temple.

Tiruvenlukkai: This is a small temple dedicated to Yoga Narasimha, also called Alagiyasingar, and has been sung by Pey Alwar and Tirumangai Alwar. There is a *gopura* and *mandapa* of the Vijayanagar period.

Four shrines: Within the Ulagalandaperumal (Uragam) temple, there are three more shrines called Niragam, Karagam, and Karvanam. The main temple is for Trivikrama who is known here as Peragathan (also Uragam) because of the vast space occupied or measured by him. The other deities are Niragam or Vishnu with four arms and, standing in the second *prakara,* Karagam or Vishnu seated on Adisesha, also known as Karunakara Perumal, and found in the third *prakara* is Karvanam or the standing form of Vishnu.

Nitathingal Thundathan: The shrine is located within the Ekambreshwara temple. There is a tall and beautiful image of a standing Vishnu with Adisesha

behind, a very rare depiction, which has been extolled in song by Tirumangai Alwar.

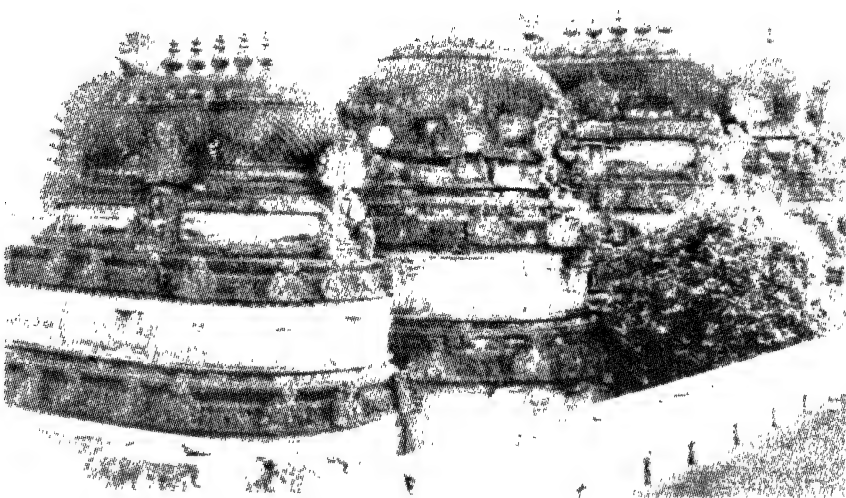
Kalvar: This standing image of Vishnu is found in a niche-shrine within the precincts of the Kamakshi Amman temple. Earlier, it appears to have been a bigger shrine. Tirumangai Alwar has sung about this shrine.

Pavala-Vannar: On the northern side of Kanchipuram on the Madras road are the two temples, Pachai-Vannan and Pavala Vannan, green coloured and red coloured respectively. The latter has been sung about by Tirumangai Alwar. Here also the presiding deity is Vishnu sitting on Adisesha.

Tiruppukkuli: On the outskirts of Kanchi is the temple for Vijayaraghava Perumal sung about by Tirumangai . It is a rare image of a seated Vishnu with Jatayu on his lap, indicating the performance of *samskaras* to Jatayu of *Ramayana* fame. The shrine for Jatayu here is a rarity. There are nearly 30 inscriptions in the temple of the Chola, Pandya and Vijayanagara times. Thus, the above nine shrines added to the four mentioned earlier (Tiruvehka, Padagam, Ashtabhujam and Varadaraja), constitute the fourteen *Divyadesa*s of Kanchi, clearly indicating the profound influence the Vaishnavites had even during the Pallava period. Architecturally and iconographically, they are important and interesting.

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2. *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, 1921, p.58 to 69 and 73 to 81. Can this term *anjan-sandi* be the Tamil equivalent of *Panchayatana*. According to the Tamil Lexicon, the word *anjan* is noted as a deity representing the Sun, one of the *Dvada Dvadasa-Adittanar* (vol.I, part I, p.38).
3. *Historical Sculptures of Vaikunta Perumal Temple*, C.Minakshi
4. *Sri Varadarajaswami Temple, Kanchi*, K.V.Raman, 1972



23. Trikodabasti
Vardhamana Temple Vimana
Tiruparuttikunram, Jaina,
Vijayanagara, 16th Century A.D.



24. Chandraprabha Temple Vimana



25. Somaskanda
Kailasanatha Temple
Pallava, 7th Century A.D.



26. Skanda
Kailasanatha Temple
Pallava, 7th Century A.D.



THE PAINTINGS OF KANCHI

by

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Kanchipuram was the capital of the Pallavas who were great patrons of the arts. Mahendra Varman I, the first of this dynasty who introduced rock-cut architecture in Tamilnadu, was given the titles *Vichitra Chitta*, *Mattavilasa*, *Chaitrahari* or temple builder, *Chitrakarapuli* or a tiger among painters, and so on. From these titles we learn of not only his love for the arts but also of his personal prowess in painting.

However, the surviving paintings belong to the period of Rajasimha, who ruled towards the end of the 7th century A.D. and who built the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram with the help of his artistic queen, Rangapataka. The few surviving examples of this period give us an idea of Pallava painting.

There are traces of line and colour in the cave temples at Mamandur, but the best examples of the art of this period are the fragments left in the structural temples at Pannamalai and Kanchipuram, discovered by Prof. Jouveau Dubreuil.

The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi contains a few surviving traces of Pallava paintings. The small cells in the *pradakshina patha* or circumambulatory passage enclosing the yard of the temple contain a few traces of colour and line on some of the walls. Little is left today, exposed as they have been to the elements and to the several miscreants who visit the temple in the name of tourism.

In Cell no.9 there are fragments of the upper and lower right arms of Shiva. In Cell no.11 there is a beautiful Pallava face of Shiva with only a part of the nose, cheek, *kundala* and *yagnopavita*. In Cell no.23 are remnants of a painting of Shiva and, in Cell no.34, of a *mahapurusha* whose *kirita*, shoulder and thigh alone remain. Cells no.12 and 46 retain a few traces of colour. Probably the most important painting which can still be identified is that of Somaskanda painted in red on the back wall of Cell no.41 (plate 25). The colours which would have once covered the paintings of his parents, Shiva and Parvati, are now absent, but the line and composition of the seated Shiva and Parvati, and a lovely attendant of Parvati, are indications of the excellence of the artist's ability. Somaskanda was a favourite theme of the Pallava period as we observe time and again, the most well-known examples being the sculptures of the shore temples at Mamallapuram. There is no doubt that this composition belongs to the same period.

Very little is visible and apparent in this painting, but the remains are an excellent indication of the wealth which has been lost. The curve of the arms and legs, the excellent proportions of the limbs, details such as the tassles, the

folds of the garments and the ornamentation are surpassed only by the very adorable baby Skanda, with plump arms and legs and the folds of the flesh clearly accentuated (plate 26). Parvati's figure is full of feminine grace. Although the face is lost, we can imagine how beautiful it would have been when even the attendant at her feet has a lovely face filled with both charm and intelligence.

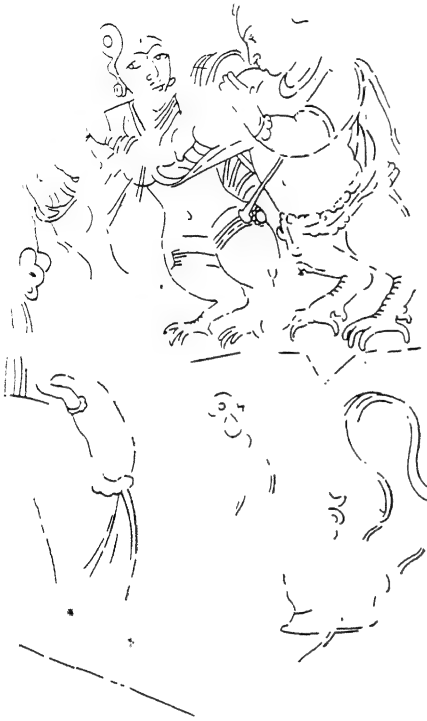
One other painting which is in a fair state of preservation is that of a *Kinnara* and *Kinnari*, a half-human and half-bird couple who are celestial musicians (plate 27). In this composition, the features of the two are similar to those of Parvati, indicating the commonality of the period. The style of the brush work and the movement of the body are strongly reminiscent of Ajanta (plate 28).

The Pallava paintings were the legacy of the great masters of the preceding Vakataka period at Ajanta. They display the same grace of line and movement. The artist was a master of brushwork and figure drawing. His utilisation of colour and design were very restrained and thus enhanced the overall aesthetic effect. The paintings were executed on a smoothly prepared surface, in fresco-secco style. The colours used are black, red, white, yellow, blue and green.

The South Indian canons of beauty had already made their appearance: the eyes are not half-closed as in the Ajanta paintings but are wide and fully awake and open, in accordance with the South Indian ideal which demands wide, beautiful eyes as they are the most striking feature in the face. Similarly, the eyebrows, although delicate and curved, meet a little more abruptly than the exaggerated bow shape of Ajanta. Finally, the faces are rounder and fuller, unlike the thin elongated figures of Ajanta (plate 29).

Before leaving the Pallava period, it is worthwhile looking at a painting from Pannamalai belonging to the same period as the Kailasanatha temple. Little remains here, but the influence of Ajanta is still very apparent at Pannamalai. This figure has the same sinuous lines and the technique of shading which was used at Ajanta to create depth, rounding of limbs and a relief effect. The eyes are somewhere between the half-closed eyes of Ajanta and the fully-opened eyes of Kailasanatha. The extraordinary *kirita* and ornamentation exemplify the painter's mastery over his art. This beautiful figure is of Parvati, covered by a bedecked umbrella, as she watches the dance of her Lord. She is reminiscent of the Vakataka princess at Ajanta and the *Surasundari* or celestial nymph of the Brihadishvara Temple at Thanjavur. The Pannamalai fresco is an indication of the superior quality of the paintings of the Pallava period and of what has been lost in the corridors of time.

The Pallava paintings of Kanchipuram were to influence contemporary and later art. The most immediate examples are the early Pandyan paintings of Sittanavasal and those of the Rashtrakutas at Ellora. The Pandyas were related



28. Kinnara - Kinnari
Kailasanatha Temple
Pallava, 7th Century A.D.



29. Parvati
Kailasanatha Temple
Pallava, 7th Century A.D.



30. Ceiling Painting



31



32



31. Bas relief of a Goddess playing the Veena Alapini
Kailasanatha Temple
Pallava, 7th Century A.D.

32. Veena Ghoshaka
Shiva Vinadhara Panel
Kailasanatha Temple
Pallava, 7th Century A.D.

33. Veena Alapini
Kamakshi Amman Temple
Vijayanagara, 16th Century A.D.

to the Pallavas through matrimony, which accounts for the very strong Pallava influences in their paintings. The Rashtrakutas were unabashed admirers and copiers of the early Chalukyas of Badami and the Pallavas of Kanchipuram. Krishna I based the Kailasa temple at Ellora on the temples of Pattadakkal, which were executed by Sarvasitti Acharya, a *sthapati* of Kanchi. The ceilings and walls of the Ellora Kailasa temple contain paintings of the various forms of Shiva. Better preserved due to the location of the temple in the hills, the paintings of Ellora continued the Pallava tradition, making us aware of the great mastery of the artists of Kanchipuram, whose talent was exhibited over such a wide geographic area.

There is a big gap between the paintings of the Pallava period and the next paintings which appear in Kanchi, those of the Vijayanagara period. It is unlikely that such a rich tradition could have died out overnight. Obviously they have either disappeared due to natural causes or were deliberately removed sometime in history.

The earliest phase of Vijayanagara painting is, interestingly, to be found in the Vardhamana temple at Tiruparuttikunram near Kanchi, built by Irugappa, the minister and general of Bukkaraya II. It is interesting that the earliest paintings of the Vijayanagara period are to be found at Kanchi, although the capital of the Vijayanagara empire was far away at Hampi. The paintings in the *sangita mandapa* depict the life of Vardhamana, such as the story of the birth of the Tirthankara from the womb of his mother Priyakamini, and the bathing and anointing of the child by Saudharmendra and his wife Shachi. The early paintings of the Vijayanagara period as depicted in this temple are very elegant and reproduce in accurate detail the various ideals of deportment, ornamentation and decoration of the period. Saudharmendra's dance before Vardhamana is a beautifully animated painting reminiscent of the preceding Chola period.

The most matured paintings of the Vijayanagara period belong to the age of Krishnadevaraya and are found in Tiruvannamalai, not far from Kanchipuram. On the ceiling of the tall, southern *gopura* built on the orders of Krishnadevaraya, is a painting of an elephant chased by soldiers, a large panel occupying most of the central square. There is a marked resemblance between the paintings here and those of the paintings of the Virupaksha temple at Hampi. Unfortunately, the former, restricted to a *mandapa* in the temple, are now covered with soot.

Krishnadevaraya's successor, Achyutadevaraya, commissioned some paintings on the Varadarajaperumal temple at Kanchipuram. On the walls of the temple, framed in panels, are the 108 *divyadishas* of Vaishnavism. In the *Andal unjal mandapa*, the ceiling is covered with stories of Krishna from the *Bhagavata Purana* and *Harivamsha*, stories of the *Gopikavastraharana*, *Kaliyamardana*, Vishnu with his consorts, and so on (plate 30). Other common themes include

the Vijayanagara crest of the boar and dagger, Vidyadhara riders of palanquins composed of feminine figures, and similar paintings of elephants and horses composed of female figures, as *vahanas* of Rati and Manmatha. Garuda and the *devas* deck the corners, along with Rati and Manmatha who are the principal themes in a *mandapa* opposite the Narasimha shrine. In the main shrine of Varadaraja, there is a painting of the Lord's Garuda *vahana*, with large umbrellas on either side representing the famous Garuda *vahana* festival for which the Varadaraja temple is still famous.

The colours of even the Vijayanagara paintings have practically disappeared, yet the remaining outlines depict prominent figures, strong, undulating lines and animated movement. The only prominent colours left are the reds, yellows, greens and blacks, the other colours having faded with time. The paintings in this temple belong to the end of the 16th century, except for a panel in the main shrine, of Vishnu from Tiruvadandai with his three consorts Lakshmi or Thirumangai, Bhudevi or Manamangai and Niladevi. Built in the 17th century, the workmanship of these paintings is far inferior to the earlier Vijayanagara paintings.

The other paintings of Tiruparuttikunram belong to a later period of Vijayanagara art, to the 16th century, and resemble very closely the paintings of the Varadarajaperumal temple in form and detail, although not in content. This temple also contains the paintings of a even later set of rulers, again interestingly the earliest of this period. The Nayakas of the 17th century added to Jaina themes the various *bala leelas* of Rishabhadeva, the first Tirthankara, of Vardhamana, the last, of Krishna his cousin and Neminatha and so on, as well as the stories of the life of Neminatha. These paintings are portrayed as long elaborate panels with Tamil explanations of each incident. The presentation of the *poornakumbha* and flowers and other objects of welcome are stressed in these descriptions, while dancers and musicians occupy several lovely panels.

This practice of continuous narration accompanied by elaborate descriptions was to become an important feature of painting hereafter and may be seen in all the succeeding Nayaka paintings of Southern India and even in the paintings of the later Maratha period. The Nayakas exhibited a preference for long bands of narrative episodes with laborious themes accompanied by long descriptions in Tamil or Telugu, whether on murals or miniatures, on paper or cloth, temple hangings and book illustrations.

We do not know whether it is by chance that the earliest surviving examples of three important periods of painting in Tamilnadu are to be found in Kanchipuram. It may be an accident that similar work elsewhere was destroyed or defaced. However, from the little that is visible, it appears that the painters of Kanchipuram played a major role in each rennaissance of South Indian art.

THE RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN AND AROUND KANCHIPURAM

by

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Kanchipuram was well known as a Buddhist centre during the pre-and post-Christian eras. Further, it played a very great role as the capital of the Pallavas from the 3rd to the 9th centuries A.D. Thereafter, it retained its fame and name till the intrusion of foreign rulers into Tamilnadu.

The excavations carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India, University of Madras and the State Department of Archaeology, have revealed that Kanchipuram was an ancient habitational site having artefacts dating from the Megalithic period. The earliest phase at Kanchipuram consists of black and redware, black polished ware and the associated redware. The next phase is associated with the historical period from the 3rd century B.C. to the 2nd or 3rd centuries A.D. The third phase is characterised by the occurance of Pallava coins and the associated potsherds. The next phase is related to the medieval period.

In the 2nd phase, there are some interesting artefacts like Satavahana coins, imported as well as locally made amphorae and beads made of semi-precious stones. Some remnants of the Buddhist *stupas* were also found in this phase. In the Pallava phase, the lead coins of the Pallava period, the moulds of the coins and the associated potsherds are the characteristic features. The phase of the medieval period contained some fragmentary ringwells, a few terracotta human figurines and a storage jar. The above artefacts clearly show the existence of Kanchi from the Megalithic period, its association with Buddhism and its commercial contacts with the West Asian countries. They are also suggestive of the fact that Kanchipuram was under the influence of the Satavahanas from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. and that the Pallavas had issued both lead and copper coins bearing the figure of the bull on the obverse and a pot or a *chaitya* tree on the reverse.

The Archaeological Survey of India carried out the removal of lime plaster and lime wash found on the ancient paintings belonging to the Pallava period on the walls of the subsidiary shrines attached to the *prakara* wall of the Kailasanatha temple. They have exposed a number of exquisite paintings which were hidden under the lime plasters applied by the British either to protect the paintings or to give a facelift to the temple. The paintings are found in between niches 26 and 27, 27 and 28, 28 and 29. Some traces of paintings have been found in the niches 11 to 32 and 32 and 33. There is an interesting painting of Somaskanda (plate 25). It shows the jewellery, dress decoration, etc., painted in classical style. In the niche between 26 and 29, a delineation of Shiva and Parvati, though not completely intact, gives a good idea of the original image.

In the niches between 26 and 27 there is a panel depicting Shiva and Parvati, the latter with a head dress (plate 29).

The painting of Parvati and Skanda in a cell of this temple is quite fascinating and graceful. Parvati is found seated with her child Skanda wearing *channa vira* on his chest. The painting appears akin to the one of Guhambigai at Melapperumpallam. The *Kinnara Mithunas* (plate 27) found drawn in another niche are also attractive figures. The male figure is in the process of turning his face towards the female, while the female figure seems to have turned her eyes towards a distant place. In another panel, Somaskanda is shown flanked by Vishnu and Brahma.

In all the panels, the figures are most elegantly drawn and the details are excellently given. Even the bindings found on the abdomen of Parvati are neatly drawn by the artist. There are some traces of paintings on some sculptures also. These paintings clearly attest to the fact that the whole temple of Kailasanatha (from the basement to the *shikhara*) was decorated with colourful paintings depicting all the aspects of Shiva. The artistic skill of the painters of the Pallava period was thus a highly evolved one.

In a place called Ponnur which is about 30 k.m. from Kanchipuram, an image which could not be easily identified was found by the State Department of Archaeology about a year ago (plate 11). The figure is standing on a lotus, flanked by a *Bhutagana* on either side. These *Bhutaganas* appear to have emerged from the lotus flower. The image has four hands holding the *akshamala* in the right upper hand and an axe-like weapon in the left upper hand, while the right lower hand is in the *abhaya mudra*, the left lower is placed on the thigh as in *uruhasta*. The head is decorated with *kiritamakuta*. A thick *yagnopavita* is found running over the lower right forehand. The garment is found worn up to the foot, which is typical of the Pallava Vishnu. As this figure has an *akshamala* which is associated with Brahma, the axe which is associated with Shiva and the *kritamakuta* and dress up to the foot as worn by Vishnu, scholars presume that this sculpture may represent the Trimurtis. It has yet to be examined in detail and the final conclusion yet to be arrived at.

Similarly, a Durga of the 5th or 6th centuries A.D. has been located in Valaiyathur, a remote village near Arani, which is not far away from Kanchipuram (plate 12). This image is carved on a granite slab which is about 5'3" in height. Durga is shown standing erect upon the head of a big buffalo. Her upper right hand appears to hold a dagger while the upper left appears to bear either a *kapala* or a conch; the lower right holds a sword crossing the abdomen, while the lower left holds some unidentifiable object.

Some years ago, an interesting inscription found engraved on the wall of the Kamakshi temple at Kanchipuram was noted by the State Department of Archaeology. This inscription is in poetic form and tells us about the birth place

of the great poet 'Kalamegam', who was known for using pun in poetry, as Ennayiram which is identified with the village where the famous educational institution was in existence during the Chola period. The palaeography of this inscription assigns it to the 14th or 15th century A.D.

Another interesting inscription which is written in two languages has been found on the wall of the Ekambareshwara temple at Kanchipuram by Dr.R.Nagaswamy, former Director of the State Department of Archaeology. This inscription is written in the year 1532 A.D. It mentions the work known as *Shivabhaktavilasam,* which is identified with *Upamanyabhaktavilasam.* It appears to be the exact translation of the *Periapuranam* written by Sekillar. This inscription helps to put to end the argument which has been going on for the past 50 years as to which is earlier, the *Periapuranam* or the *Shivabhaktavilasam.* It seems that the *Periapuranam*, the story of the *Nayanmars,* was very popular not only among Tamils, but also among people who spoke other languages. The inscription says that the *Upamanyabhaktavilasam* would be an invaluable source for re-editing the *Periapuranam* with more accuracy. It also states that the *Upayābhakthavilasam* would facilitate scholars who were engaged in the research of the story of the Shaiva saints in gathering more information.

Very recently, some fascinating paintings were found drawn on the walls of the western gateway of Varadarajaperumal temple, Kanchipuram, by Dr.R.Nagaswamy. These paintings depict the story of the *Bhagavatham*, and Lord Krishna is shown performing his *leela*. The ten days of the *brahmotsavam* festival is also beautifully shown in the painting. There are some scenes which delineate the figures of beautiful damsels positioning themselves to make up the figure of an elephant. A few scenes depict the figures of *bhattars* and their *guru* with label inscriptions datable to *circa* 18th century A.D.

ROMAN VESTIGES IN KANCHIPURAM

by

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The present paper seeks to investigate the nature of early Mediterranean contacts with the Chingleput region, mainly Kanchipuram and its environs. In the absence of all other types of evidences, the meagre archaeological data available for the study has necessarily to be subjected to a thorough scrutiny.

The Finds

The series of archaeological excavations at Kanchi have brought to light several types of ceramics, some of them believed to be of Roman origin. Full details of none of the excavations have been published and as per the available information, there are significant differences between the stratigraphy of different trenches (the trenches were laid, sometimes at a distance of over 1 km. from each other, in many parts of the old city)[1], thus making it extremely difficult to assess the chronological position of a particular pottery-type in relation to another. Piecing together all the facts known so far, the following period-wise division of the early settlements of Kanchi may be attempted:

Period IA - third century B.C. to first century B.C - yielding the Megalithic black and red ware, all black ware and grey ware and the russet-coated painted ware.

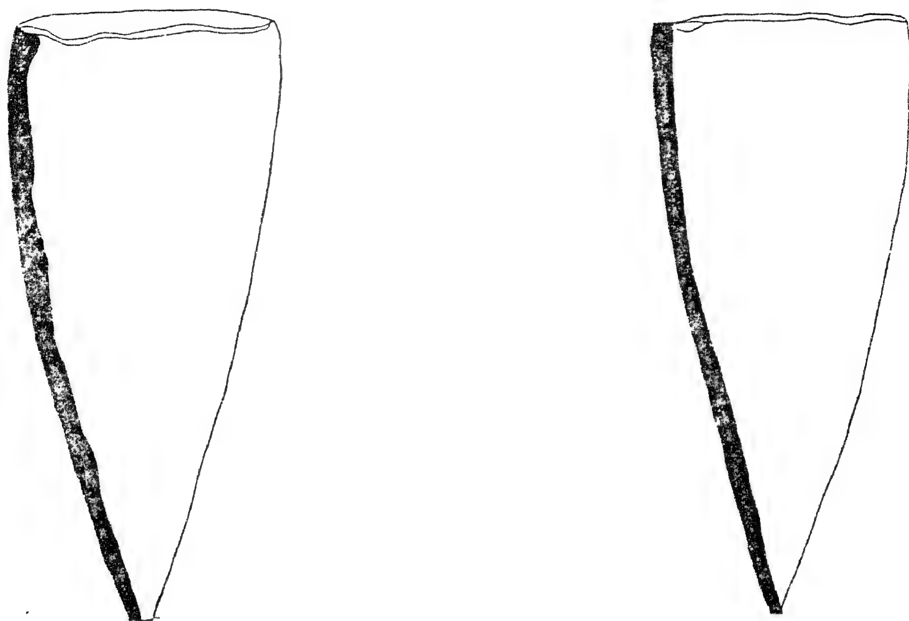
Period IB - first century B.C to third century A.D. when the black and red and the russet-coated wares of the earlier period continue; in addition, the rouletted and arretine wares and the conical jars make their appearance.

Period II - third century A.D. to seventh-eighth century A.D. is marked by the predominance of the red slipped ware, the brown slipped ware and the dull red ware.

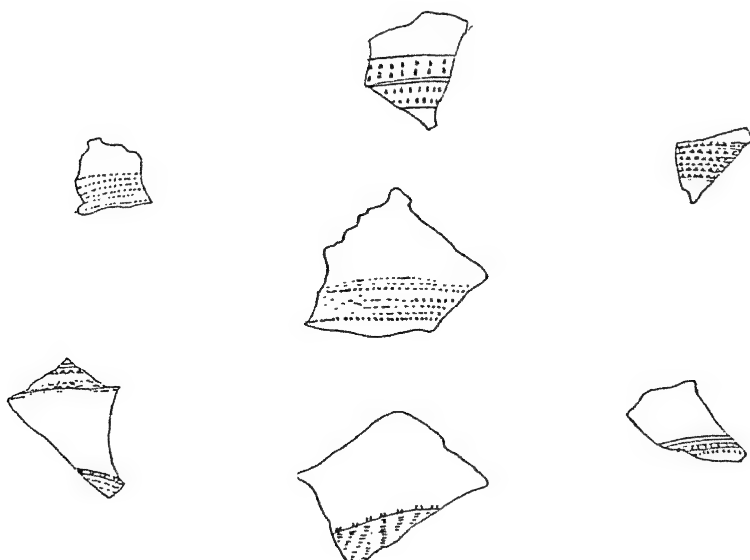
Period III - eighth century A.D. to thirteenth century A.D. has revealed the coarse red ware and the Chinese celedon ware[2].

It may be stressed that the above division is purely tentative and is subject to modifications in the light of the availability of full details of the excavated materials. It is not clear whether the russet-coated painted ware first appeared at Kanchi in periods IA or IB; this is a very crucial question, especially in the context of a very recent study which has clearly indicated that this ware has a wide distribution from Madurai in the south to Nevasa in the north and a long time span (400-300 B.C. to 400 A.D - a period of nearly eight hundred years) and its epicentre was the Coimbatore region from where it spread to Andhra-Karnataka and not vice versa[3]. The rouletted sherds of Kanchi first appear in period IB and continue, to a limited extent, during period II. The arretine ware and the conical jars were found in period IB alone but at a layer

CONICAL JARS FROM KANCHI



ROULETTED POTSHERDS FROM KANCHI




LOCATION OF TRENCHES
1. Arakkonam Road
2. Oli Mohammed Pettai
3. Raja Veedhi
4. Odai Street
5. Railway Station
6. Kamakshi Amman temple Sannadhi Street
7. East Raja Street
8. Ekambareswara Temple
9. Nellukara Street
10. Hospital Road
11. Gandhi Road
12. Vanniar chekkupettai Street
13. Radham Street
14. Pillai Palayam Road
15. Ayyangar Palayam Road
16. Thirukatchi Nambi Hall Street
17. C.R.Annadurai Street
18. South Mada Street
19. Varadaraja Perumal Street
1
2
8
3
4
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17

later than the earliest rouletted-ware yielding deposit (one trench laid near the Vaikuntha Perumal temple revealed fragments of conical jars from the lowest levels of period II but it should be noted that periods IA and IB were not seen at this trench, the earliest layer being of period II. Hence, it is quite likely that the conical pieces actually belonged to period IB which was either badly disturbed or else not clearly identifiable at this trench). This is in conformity with the finds at Arikamedu and elsewhere[4].

As regards the numismatic finds, Kanchi has surprisingly not yielded any Roman coin. It has also been opined that the entire northern Tamilnadu (comprising mainly Madras-Chingleput, North Arcot and South Arcot regions) is poor in Roman coin finds, barring a few discoveries in the coastal areas[5]. It is in this context that a few significant finds, most of them unpublished and not widely known, may be noted here. Madras city itself has yielded few Roman issues-the Mambalam hoard of 770 silver punch marked coins along with a single *denarius* of Augustus is well known[6]. This find is comparable, in its composition, to the one from Pennar (near Coimbatore) which again revealed an Augustan *denarius* along with a potful of *karsapanas*[7]. Saidapet (not far from Mambalam) yielded a worn Roman coin in copper along with several native issues[8]. If the contention that this find is from an old temple[9] is true, it is one of the few instances of a Roman coin being buried along with indigenous ones as part of ritualistic deposits - a practice very common in Buddhist establishments of the north-west[10] but very rare in the south, the only other recorded example being the *aurei* hoard underneath the remnants of an ancient Hindu temple at Nellore[11]. The coastal site of Mahabalipuram has brought to light several specimens of fourth and fifth century Roman coppers, including those of Theodosius II.[12] Another interesting find is from Alamporai near Madurantakam, where several gold and at least one copper issue of the Romans were recovered[13].

Roman Contacts With Kanchi: An Analysis

The above data pertaining to the ceramic finds at Kanchipuram and the coin-finds in Chingleput region as a whole, may be analysed to determine the nature of early Mediterranean links with this city. The discovery of the rouletted and the other so - called Roman pottery in the archaeologically stratified context has been often assumed to be an indication of Kanchi's contacts with the Roman world[14]. But in the light of a study of the significance and pattern of distribution of the Roman objects found throughout the country, one may conclude, with ample justification, that Kanchipuram maintained little, if any, direct contact-commercial or cultural-with ancient Rome. The reasons for this hypothesis have been summarised below.

Kanchi is not a coastal city and hence could never have directly participated in the sea-borne trade with the West which originated, according to the latest evidence, at least around 200 B.C., if not even slightly earlier.[15] The occurence

of foreign coins in a region is always a far better and a more tangible evidence than any other type of foreign object for the commercial contacts of that area with a foreign power (all other kinds of antiquities may be instances of items brought in by tourists or pilgrims or may be local products in imitation of or resembling foreign objects, but the presence of non- indigenous coins, especially in large numbers, would indicate some sort of commercial transactions with the non-native power; even if the coins were local imitations, they could not have been produced for any reason whatsoever, unless sufficient numbers of the genuine ones had entered the area, by means of trade. In this connection, the absence of Roman coins not only in any of the archaeological excavations at Kanchi but even as stray occurrences on the surface is significant.

Contrary to popular misconception, the rouletted ware has a very wide distribution throughout India; nearly ninety sites spread over Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra have yielded this ware.[16] Unlike the Roman coins, the rouletted ware is not concentrated in the coastal areas but is found in very large numbers in the interior as well, Ayodhya being the innermost site.[17] Several places which have not revealed a single Roman coin have brought to light hundreds of rouletted sherds; many of these sites were mentioned neither in early Indian literature nor in the classical accounts and have never been regarded as ancient trade centres.[18] All this conclusively proves that even those Indian areas which did not maintain any contact with the western world were familiar with the rouletted ware which was first brought by the Romans to the coastal sites and which spread rapidly to remote areas in the interior - a view confirmed by the fact that local varieties of the ware were manufactured both in the interior and the coastal sites.[19] Some of the rouletted sherds from Kanchipuram itself seem to be of the imitation variety, judging from the thick fabric and crude workmanship of many of the specimens.[20] The number of arretine pieces found at the site is, again, very negligible, estimates varying from one to over four fragments.[21] The red conical jars, erroneously termed as amphora or imitation amphora (unlike the amphora, these jars do not possess handles, are of very coarse fabric and are dull red in colour), are confined to only four sites in the whole of India (Kanchi, Karaikadu,[22] Vasavasamudram [23] and Arikamedu[24]-all in North Tamilnadu) and Kanchi has yielded the maximum number. Kanchi, thus, is one of the several sites, like Uraiyur[25], where the Roman pottery (entering the city from nearby coastal trading stations such as Vasavasamudram) exercised profound influence on the local ceramic tradition but there does not seem to have been much of an active commercial or cultural intercourse between this city and Rome. The indirect contacts with regard to pottery seem to have originated a little before the Christian era and were at their height in the first two centuries A.D. Some contacts may have continued, though on a very low scale, during the late Roman period (fourth-fifth centuries A.D) as evidenced by the finds at Mahabalipuram, Saidapet and Alamporai (the

date of the Roman coins at the latter two sites is unknown, but the fact that there were copper coins indicates that they may have belonged to the later period, as Roman coppers of the first two centuries A.D. are very, very scarce in India-Tamilnadu has yielded a single specimen at Vellaiyaniruppu (Thanjavur district) and even this is not beyond doubt[26]). Of course, the publication of all the available excavated evidences and new finds, hitherto unknown, is bound to throw fresh light on Kanchi's relationship with the Mediterranean world.

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16. The present writer is in the final stages of his research on Roman coins and other antiquites in India at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. All the observations regarding the Roman finds in India are based on this study.

17. *IAR,* 1976-77, pp 52-53.

18. Please refer to footnote 16 above West Bengal, for example, has yielded hardly any Roman coin but rouletted ware finds have been reported from Chandraketugarh, Atghara,, Bachri, Baral, Deulpota, Hadipur, Hariharpur, Harinarayanpur, Mahinagar, Saptagram and Tamluk in that state. Similar examples can be cited for many other regions of India.

19. No study has been made to determine the number of sites yielding the imitation of rouletted wares. The finds from Narsipur, Kodumanal and Karur and some other sites are believed to be of the local variety. For more details, refer to Rajan, K. (1991), *op.cit.*

20. Arasu P. (1979), *op.cit.*, p56.

21. *Ibid*, pp. 54-55 mentions over four fragments while K.V.Raman (1978) in his article, Archaeological investigations in the recent Past-Tamilnadu and Kerala in *A decade of Archaeological Studies in South India*, notes only one arretine sherd (p.6). But Raman's recent article (1987, *op.cit.*) is silent on the arretine ware finds at Kanchi.

22. *IAR,* 1966-67, p21.

23. *IAR,* 1969-70, p34; 1970-71, p33; Nagaswamy R. and Majeed, Abdul A. (1978), *Vasavasamudram*, pp1-27.

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25. Raman K.V.(1988), *Excavations at Uraiyur (Tiruchirappalli)*, 1965-69, pp. 29-68. Uraiyur too was a non-coastal (interior) town like Kanchi, and it also yielded numerous rouletted sherds but no Roman coins. Several ancient port-towns on the Coromandel Coast have yielded Roman pottery but no coins, eg. Karaikadu, Vasavasamuḍram (Arikamedu has not revealed coins in the course of excavations. But stray occurences of a few Roman coins have been reported from the area by W.Elliot 1886, *op.cit*. and K.V.Raman 1991, *op.cit*.). Sites yielding Roman pottery but no coins are, however, rare on the Malabar Coast. The only plausible explanation for this phenomenon is that at least till the first century A.D., the rounding of Cape Comorin was considered very hazardous by western sailors and hence, all Roman ships landed on the west coast, where commercial intercourse was more brisk and early Roman relics more numerous. (The position, however, completely changed from the first century A.D. onwards). The Roman ceramics and the techniques involved in its manufacture would have travelled from the west coast, through the Palghat pass, to the various sites of Tamilnadu where they have been recovered in stratified layers dated to the first century A.D.

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THE THEVARAM AND DIVYAPRABANDHAM TRADITION OF KANCHI

by

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Kanchipuram is one of the *Mukti kshetrams* and is the *Prithvilinga Kshetram.* The three *Nayanmars*, Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar have sung in praise of one or more temples of Kanchi.

In the *Thevaram* and the *Divyaprabandam* literature, Kanchipuram is referred to as Thirukkacchiekambam, belonging to Thondainadu. In the Thiruppanandal edition of the *Sambandar Thevaram*, this city is referred to as a favourite of Lord Brahma. It is said that Kanchipuram means a city desired by Brahma, the word *Ka* standing for Brahma and *anchi* or *anchudal* meaning desire. Kanchi is also referred to as Tiruvegambam. When Iraivi was offering *pooja* to the Almighty, the river Kambaiyaru's bank broke and the surrounding areas began to flood. On seeing this, he embraced the Almighty in fear. Hence the city came to be known as Ekambam.

Thirugnana Sambandar has sung four *Thevarams* in praise of Ekambaranatha or Periyakambar. The name of the goddess is Evalarkuzhali or Kamakshi Amman. The first *padikam* is as follows:

Venda venphodi Poosumaarbin

Virinool oru poruntha

Pan - mekaraaga kurinji (raaga - neelambari)

It consists of eleven stanzas but the seventh stanza has been lost. Sambandar refers to the *sthala* thus:

Paimbhozhil kacchi yekambam, pozhil soozntha

Yekambam - malai venmahti thoyum

Mamathirkacchi managarul yelamnaria solaisoozh

Yekambam yentha idar kedume.

In the first stanza he says:

Enthai mevia ekambam thozhathaththa idar kedume

In the last line of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th and 10th stanzas, he stresses the fact that anyone reaching this temple or praising the lord will get rid of all the obstacles in his path.

In the *Thirukkadaikkappu* he further beautifully describes the temple and the city thus:

Yerinar pozhil soozhntha kachchiekambam meyavanai
Karinar manimada mhongu kazhamala nannagarul
Parinar tamizhgnana sambanthan paraviya paththum vallaar
Seerinaar pughazhonghi vinnavarodum serbavare.

According to Prof. K.V.Raman, 'Ekambam' means a pillar of *Jyoti*. Lord Shiva is described as a pillar of fire. This is very well emphasised in the 9th stanza. The next *Thevaram* of Sambandar is *Maraiyanai masilar* in *pan Indolam*. Another *Thevaram* is a *Thiruvirukkukkural* which is in couplets, *Karuvarkacchi* in *pan kolli* (*raaga navaroj*). The fourth is *payumallidai* in *pan pazhan pancuram* (*sankarabharanam*).

Saint Thirunavukkarasar has sung a *Thevaram*, a *Thirunerisai*, two *Thirukkuruntohais* and two *Thiruttandakams* in praise of the deity Tiruekambar.

The *Thevaram* is in *pan gandharan (raaga - mohanam)*. It is called the *manathul vaitha thirupathigam,* as in all the ten stanzas he repeats the phrase *en manathe vaithene* (I kept within my heart and soul). This is popularly rendered in *pan sevvazhi (yadukula kambodi)*. The interesting fact is that the last stanza is *Atuthanai urithanai* which is widely sung with the *kondukutti* or the *srotovaha yati*:

Kodhuththanai
Patham kodhuththanai
Pasupatham kodhuththanai
Arjunarkku pasupatham kodhuththanai
Uhuriththanai Arjunarkku pasupatham kodhuththanai
Aduththanai uhuriththanai Arjunarkku pasupatham koduththanai.

Appar has to his credit a variety of compositions. A *Thirunerisai, Nambanai nagara moonrum,* a *Thiruviruttam, Ohthuvitthai* and two *Thirukkuruntohais, pandu seidha pazha vinai* and *poo mehl*.

Saint Sundarar, while staying at Kanchi, visited Thirukkacchianekatangavadan, where the presiding deity is Kaladeshwara and the goddess Kamakshi Amman. Sundarar also sings in praise of the deity Thirumetrali Nayakar at Thirukkacchimettali. However, the most important *Thevaram* of Sundaramurti Nayanar is *Alamthan uganthu*. He left Thiruvottriyur and lost his eye-sight in both the eyes as he did not keep up his promise to Sangili Nachiyar. After visiting many shrines he came to Kanchi where he pleaded with

Thiruekambaradayan to restore his eyesight and when the Lord blessed him and restored the vision in his left eye, he sang thus:

ualam than ughanthu amudhu seithaanai

This incident of getting back his vision is recorded in the last line of ten out of the eleven stanzas.

Coming to the Vaishnavite literature, among the twelve *Alwars,* it was Poigai Alwar who hailed from Kanchi - to be precise Thiruvekka - Yathothkari *sannidhi.* The Lord is *chonnavannam seida Perumal* and Komalavalli Nacchiyar the goddess. Fifteen *pasurams* have been sung in praise of the above deity by Poigai, Tirumazhisai, Tirumangai, Pei and Nammalwar.

The next shrine is Thiruattabuyakaran. Adikesavaperumal, the deity, derives his name from his eight hands and his Goddess is Alarmelumangai. There are twelve songs sung by Thirumangai and Peyalwar. In Thirumangai Alwar's *Periyathirumadal,* he refers to Kacchivekka, Ooragam and Attapuyakaram.

The next important shrine is Thiruparameshvara Vinnagaram - Vaikunta Perumal *kovil.* The Lord here is Paramapathanathan and Vaikuntavalli is the goddess. On the walls we find many sculptures belonging to the Pallava period. There are three postures of the Lord standing, sitting and reclining. Thirumangai Alwar alone has sung 10 *pasurams.*

The last shrine is at Attiyur, also called *Chinna* Kanchipuram, the God being Varadaraja Perumal and the Goddess being Perunthevi Thayar. It is said that the elephant, Iravatha, became a mountain to shelter the Lord and hence it was called Ahi-ur, *ahi* meaning elephant. This is one of the three important Vaishnava temples, the other two being at Srirangam and Thiruvenkadan. Thirumangaiyalwar has sung four songs in praise of Varadharaja Perumal, Bhuthathalwar two and Periyalwar one.

The city of Kanchi is not only rich because of the various shrines, but has also inspired all these saint singers to compose the various hymns which have enriched our literary heritage.

KANCHI MATH FROM HISTORIC EVIDENCE

by

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Kanchi, a land conducive to a multiplicity of religions, a site of religious and cultural evolution, hosted the establishment and growth of Shaivisim, Vaishnavism, Jainism, Buddhism and Advaita. It becomes a place of exciting and enlightening study. The significance of Kanchi as a place worthy of serious study rests solely on the glory of its past. It was once a very great and flourishing city, probably one of the oldest in South India known for its learning, power, wealth and prosperity. It is one of the seven sacred cities in India, on par with Ayodhya, Mathura, Gaya, Kashi, and Avantika and promised *moksha* to an individual. It is also one of the eighteen Shakti *pithas* in India as well as being a *tirtha*.

Vedanthadesika in his Adaikalapattu, praises this city in the following words: 'Like a crow that flies in every direction and falls, exhausted, being unable to obtain the Lord through devotion, I have sought as refuge the grace of the Lord of Hastagiri of Kanchi which is the most important of the seven cities that give salvation'.

The importance of asceticism in ancient Indian society was reflected in the teachings of the *Upanishads* and in the ideal of the four *ashramas* of life. In the last stage, as a very old man, Man would become a homeless wandering *sanyasi*. The residence of an ascetic of a *math* was naturally a place which attracted the attention of those seeking spiritual guidance and the hermit or *sanyasi*, if willing to teach, becomes a special type of *guru*. In this way, some *maths* became centres of learning, places where disciples desirous of learning spiritual truths could congregate and meet their *guru* for instruction.

The place of Shankara in Kanchi - a historical perspective

Shri Adi Shankara, reverentially adored as Shri Bhavagatpada, was a luminary of everlasting radiance in the spiritual firmament of India whose light has travelled through the centuries to the far corners of the globe. After expounding the truth of *Advaita* and securing its strength and solidarity on the firm foundation of *Bhashya* to ensure that the tradition of his teachings was preserved and transmitted to future generations by precept and by example, Shri Shankara established, wherever his mission took him in India, the *shishyas* whom he had gathered under him through the years, who could 'speak with the authentic voice of their discipleship under him and be exemples of the way of life that he had promulgated. Such seats of religions were the *maths* that he founded which, in course of time, grew to be bastions of the Vedic faith and practiced the highest reaches of the Advaita philosophy.

Shri Shankara was the author of popular hymns and commentaries on the Upanishads, Vedanta, Sutras, Gita, etc., He stressed the importance of the philosophic aspect of religion. He expounded the doctrine of *Vedanta* and based his philosophy on the Vedas and Smritis. He recognised no difference between Shiva and Vishnu. His philosophy was a vigorous and absolute monism - the Brahman alone is real, all else illusory, the manifestation of *maya*. He felt that the strength of a religion lay in morality and he instituted an order of ascetics called Dasanamis. His religion was Vedantism. The Smarthas, his followers, worship Shiva, but the basis of this faith is not Shaivism but the recognition of the great body of Indian tradition, the *Smriti*. That was the essence of Shankara's teaching. Shankara brought out a new answer, namely *Advaita,* to the various schools of philosophy. Shankara exhorted that sectarian religions should abandon their narrowness and fanaticism, desist from branding their bodies with cult symbols and turn to the higher modes of worship and ways of life. Anandagiri's Shankaravijayam, which is the most authentic work on the life of Shankara, confirms the fact that he consecrated the Shri Chakra at Kanchi and established the Kamakoti *pitha* and directed Sureshvara to be in charge of it. It also refers to the fact that Shri Shankara obtained five Spatika-Lingas: Yoga Linga, Bhoga Linga, Vara Linga, Mukti Linga and Moksha Linga from Shiva at Kailasa.

Further, the Jagadguruparamparya-Stuti states that Shri Shankara attained *siddhi* at Kanchi. The *Patanjali Charita*, which deals with the life of Shankara, concludes by saying that he spent his last days at Kanchi.

The great Ithihasa, Shivarahasya, in the 16th chapter, 9th *amsa*, refers to the life and work of Shankara and states that he worshipped the five Spatika Lingas (*yoga, bhoga, vara, mukti and moksha*) brought from Kailasa and attained *siddhi* at Kanchi. The Markandeya Samhita too confirms the same and informs us that Shankara installed the *Yoga Linga* at Kanchi.

The Madhaveya Shankara Vijayam says that after worshipping at Rameshwaram and visiting other places in the Pandya and Chola countries, Shri Shankara reached Kanchi and had a temple constructed for Kamakshi in Kanchi. He is said to have put an end to Tantric worship then and introduced Vedic worship instead. Anandagiri's Shankaravijayam refers to Shri Shankara's visit to Kanchi and the establishment of a *matham* and the presentation of a *Yoga Linga* to Sureshvara. It also states that Shankara attained *siddhi* at Kanchi. Another work, Shankarabhyudaya by Raja Chudamani Dikshita, also says that Shri Shankara spent his last days at Kanchi. Govindanathiyan narrates Shankara's life in the Vijayashachaliya. Though this work does not mention the *mathams* founded by the Acharya, it says that after ascending the *sarvajnapitha* at Kanchi, he attained *siddhi*. Dr.S.K.Belvalker says, "According to one set of traditions, Kanchi in South India is given as the place where the Acharya breathed his last. According to other sources he died in Badrikashrama,

disappearing into a cave in the Himalayas. The weight of probability belongs to the first view".

From the divergent views, we may gather that Kedarnath in the north and Kanchi in the south are the only two places that have claims to the distinction of being the places of *siddhi* of the great Acharya. Dr.Belwalker and Prof.Wilson have preferred Kanchi to Kedarnath. Some of the Guruparam para Stotras also support this view. The Patanjali Charita makes a mention of Shankara and in the last verse says that after compiling his Bhashya and touring the four corners of the country, Shankara finally settled down at Kanchi.

As a result of Shankara's close association with Kanchi, there is a life-sized stone image of Shankara in a shrine adjoining the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Shri Kamakshi temple. The temples of all denominations of Kanchi, like the Iravattaneshwarar temple belonging to the Pallava period, the Vaikuntha Perumal temple of the Pallava period, the Punyakotishwara temple in Vishnu Kanchi, the Narasimha temple in Sevilimedu (suburb of Kanchi) and the Ekambranatha temple, abound in sculptures representing a *sanyasin* with *eka-danda*, many of which could easily be identified as those of Shri Shankara.

The sculptural evidences which were discussed earlier regarding Shankara's association with Kanchi bear testimony to the conclusion that Shankara settled at Kanchi. Kanchi, in those days, was the meeting place of all the various faiths, tenets and cultures of India. Shankara probably settled in this town which was, at the time, the great converging centre of all the faiths and cultures of the country.

Ministry of Shankara

The ministry of Shankara may be viewed from three important aspects: to extirpate heresies like the *charvaka* philosophy of materialism, Buddhism, and Jainism, to counter the orthodoxies like *Nyaya - Vaisheshika* and *Sankhya - Yoga* and to combat certain sectarian religious practices of the Shaktas, Kapalikas and Kalamukhas [1]. The answer to all these doctrines and sects was *Advaita* [2]. Every sectarian god is but an aspect of Ishvara. In him all the gods find their culmination. God or Ishvara in his triple aspects as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva is the whole and sole cause of the world. The worship of any one of these aspects or even of a lower expression of the godhead, will eventually lead the worshipper nearer the goal. Through disciplines such as the performance of the *karmas* relating to one's stage and class in life, through devotion to God or to any of his manifestations and through the *yoga* of mind-control, one gains competence to pursue the path of knowledge. This consists of study, reflection and continued meditation resulting in the realization of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Self. Shankara exhorted the sectarians to shake off their narrowness and factionalism, desist from branding their bodies with cult symbols and turn to higher modes of worship and ways of life. His next

labour was to restore the pure Vedic religion,[3] so he led them on to the path of *Veda* and *Vedanta*. This was accomplished by his writing *bhashyas* on the Upanishads, and Brahma-sutras and on the Bhagavad Gita, where he expounded the doctrine of *Advaita*, placing it on a firm philosophic foundation. He further purged religion of its objectionable accretions and superstitions and restored the pure Vedic mode of worship. He promoted the spirit of harmony among the various cults by popularising the *panchayatana* form of worship. According to this mode, the representations of five deities - Aditya, Ambika, Vishnu, Gunanatha and Maheshwara - are together worshipped, the principal seat being offered to any one of the five, who was the chosen deity of the devotee.

To safeguard India's cultural unity based on *Advaita* and in order to hold aloft the ideal of spirituality, Shankara founded institutions and mathas in many important places. He nominated some of his own faithful disciples to preside over the *mathas* and to propagate the doctrine of Advaita - Vedanta. Besides the well-known five *mathas*, Dwaraka, Kanchi, Sringeri, Puri and Badrikashrama, he appears to have founded less-known *mathas* at Kasi, like the Sumera Padukam *mathas* and numerous Nambudiri *mathas* like the Vadakkai *matha*, Thekkai *matha*, Neduvilai *mathas*, Thirukkazhikkadu *mathas* and the Brahameshwara *mathas* in Malabar [4]. The texts dealing with the Shankarite Institutions set up by Adi Shankara are known as *Mathamnayas* and they are *Shankaracharya - Jagadguru - Mathamnaya* [5], unpublished, *Upanishads* [6], *Shankaragranthavali* [7], *Yatisandhya Samucchaya Mathamnaya*. They give information about the various Shankara mathas for the western, eastern, northern and southern regions. An institution for a region requires three main factors: (a) a Shakti (b) a *devata* and (c) a *kshetra*. Purnagiri as the Shakti, Badrinath as the *devata* and Badri as the *kshetra tirtha* Alaknanda constitute the institution of the northern regions (*uttaramnaya*). Vimala as the Shakti, Jagannatha as the *devata* and Puri as the *kshetra* constitute the institution of the eastern region (*puravamnaya*). Bhadrakali as the Shakti, Siddeshvara as the *devata* and Dwaraka as the *kshetra* constitute the institution of the western region (*pashchimamnaya*)[8]. The *kshetra* of the institute of the southern region is Rameshwaram and the Shakti is Goddess Kamakshi. All the *mathamnayas,* except those published by Vani Vilas Press, refer to the *devata* of the institution for the southern region as Adivaraha, popularly known as Kalvar. This figure is seen in a niche in Shri Kamakshi temple, on the outside of the southern wall of the *sanctum sanctorum*. Shankara thus established the *matha* for the southern region by linking Rameshwaram situated in the extreme south with Kanchi which is the *mokshapuri*, and which is the seat of both Kamakshi and Adivaraha - the Shakti and the *devata* of the institution for the southern region.

The *mathamnaya* was concerned about the jurisdiction for administration purpose by the *Acharyas*. According to the genesis of the concept, all the *mathas* had incorporated the worship of the Shrichakra as part of the daily *pooja*.

There are ten orders of monks in the Advaita tradition[9]. They differ only in the suffix that is added to their *sanyasa* name in each order. They are collectively known as Dasanami. The suffixes are Sarasvati, Puri, Bharati, Vana, Aranya, Tirtha, Ashrama, Giri, Parvata, and Sagara. The *Acharyas* of the Kamakoti *pitha* generally assume the title Indra Sarasvati. The origin of this title is explained by Mr.N.K. Venkatesam Panthulu thus: "This title, Indra Sarasvati, has a traditional history of its own which goes to confirm the tradition that the central *matha* of Shri Shankaracharya was establised at Kanchi. It is said that on one occasion, when Sureshvara was seriously ill, Shri Shankara obtained medical aid from the Ashvins, the doctors of the Gods[10]. Indra, becoming angry, came down to the earth and aimed his *vajrayudha* at the Ashvins, but the weapon stopped without going forward and, seeing that it was due to the power of Shri Shankara, Indra gave his own title to the occupants of the Kamakoti *pitha*. The other part of the title, namely Sarasvati, is borne by the *Pitathipathi* for the reason that Shri Shankara defeated Sarasavani or Sarasvati at Kashmir. However, we do not know on what authority it is based because it is not found in any of the *Shankara Vijayas*. Even the *Brihat Shankara Vijaya* quoted by *Athra-b Bdhendra* says that, the names may be simply Sarasvati or Bharati or with the prefix Indra or Ananda i.e., Indra Sarasvati or Indra Bharati or Ananda Sarasvati or Ananda Bharati. The title Indra Sarasvati is accorded to those who are exceptionally high in spiritual eminence[11] e.g., Sadashivendra Sarasvati, Gangadhrendra Sarasvati, and Upanishad Brahmendra Sarasvati. The first *Acharya* to have this title was perhaps Sureshvaracharya. According to the custom of the time, *devas* and other eminent *gurus* were referred to by indirect names. So probably Sureshvara was referred to as Indra Sarasvati, a title which stuck to every *Acharya* of the Kamakoti *pitha*[12].

Shankara established the teacher as *sanyasi* as the norm for the following generations of Advaitins. They headed the religious institutions of Shankara.

The difference between the other *ashramas* and the Shankara *matha* was that only a self-realised *sanyasi* could be the head of the *matha*. This is considered as the reformed institutionalism of Shankara[13].

Shankara emphasised the importance of ascetism and a monostic environment for teachers of *Vedanta*. Shankara may be given credit for greater discipline and organisation in the Hindu teaching profession.

Select Inscriptions at Kamakoti-pitha

Inscriptional evidence shows that the availability of information regarding the *math* starts only from the 12th Century A.D.

The association of the Kamakoti *pitha* with the Kamakshi Amman temple is supported by a few epigraphs engraved in the Kamakshi temple. The temple of Kamakshi is in the centre of Kanchi. All the temples, whether Shaivite or Vaishnavite, have their main *gopurams* or entrances facing Kamakostham.

Kamakostham is referred to as Kamakottam in ancient Tamil literature[14]. Goddess Kamakshi is referred to in early inscriptions by the name Periya Nachchiyar of Kamakottam[15]. The Shankara *matha* at Kanchi is known as the Kamakoti *pitha* in honour of the Goddess Kamakshi[16]. The first direct available epigraphical evidence which shows some connection between the *matha* and the temple comes from the Kamakshi Amman temple. It is dated 1385, Subhanu with star Tiruvadirai, corresponding to 13th July, 1463 A.D.

The inscription records a gift of land in the village of Ekambranatha-charyapuram, the eastern part of Enadipudur, excluding the western part of Agaram Vijayarayapuram by Somanatha Yogishwarar, a Gurjana Brahmana and son of Narasimha Bhattar, of *Kausika gotra* and *Katyayana sutra* for *maha puja* and *tiruppani* (services and repairs) to the goddess Durga Parameshwari who is consecrated in the temple of Periya Nachiyar at Tirukkamakkottam. T.V.Mahalingam opines that the word Shripadangal is an honorific suffix which is added to the name of acharya and it could be no other than the then Acharya of Shankara *matha*[17].

The association of the Acharyas of Kamakoti *pitha* is further confirmed by an inscription which records the renovation of the Kamakshi Amman temple by Shri Chandrashekharendra Sarasvati of the Kamakoti *pitha* in 1840 A.D. That the Acharyas of Kamakoti *pitha* manage the Kamakshi Amman temple is further confirmed by the *kumbhabhishekam* which was performed in the year 1976 . A study of some of the important epigraphical references to Kamakoti *matha* will give an insight into the antiquity of the *matha*. The Kamakoti *matha* preserves a good number of copper plate inscriptions. The first copper plate inscription of the *matha* refers to a grant of the village of Ambikapuram by Vijayaganda Gopala Deva to one Shankara Yogi of the Shankara *matha* situated to the west of Shri Hasti Shailanatha Swami temple. The grant was made for the purpose of feeding one hundred and eight Brahmanas every day and gave details of the grant which was made in the cyclic year Kharas, or Adimasa Dashami of Shukla Paksha, the week day being Monday, and the star being Anuradha[18]. In spite of these details, scholars vary in their opinion regarding the date of the inscription. Paleographically, the record belongs to the 13th century A.D. N.Ramesan suggests 1111 A.D.[19], H.Krishna Shastri suggests 1351 A.D. and Prof. S.Venkateshwara, while editing the copper plates, has suggested 1291-92 A.D. with the help of astronomical details [20].

The village that was granted, Ambikapura belonged to Eyrakoshta. The village is said to be situated to the north of the river Vegavathi. The village Ambikapuram is known as Ambi today. The grant mentions that the Shankara *matha* was to the west of Hasti Shaila which is the Attiyur of the Vaishnavas, i.e., the present Vishnu Kanchi and the temple of God Varadaraja is situated on a raised platform which is called the Hasti Shaila. It is thus clear that Kamakoti *matha* was originally situated in Vishnu Kanchi and was later shifted

to Shaiva Kanchi. It is significant to note that the Kamakoti *pitha* still owns a building near the temple in Vishnu Kanchi.

We have another copper plate inscription which gives us the information that this *matha* was supported by the rulers of Vijayanagar. In 1407 A.D., Shri Viranarasimha Maharaja the elder brother of the famous king Krishna Deva Raya, had granted to Shri Maha Deva Sarasvati a village called Kundiyantandalam in the Valakuru Sima of the Padaividu *rajya*. This is also referred to as Shankaracharyapuram in an inscription in the Varadarajaswami temple at Kanchi[21].

This *matha* has been patronised by not only Hindu kings but also by the Muslim kings. A grant was made by the Qutubshahi Muslim king, Tana Shaik, who also issued a grant in 1677 A.D[22]. Tana Shaik was a remarkably broad minded ruler. The fact that he gave a grant proves that the Kamakoti *pitha* was held in high regard by kings from other religious faiths.

Another grant which has the seal of Saadat Khan, a mansabdar of the imperial court, confirms that the original donor Naib of the Nizam (1700 to 1708), granted a village to Shankaracharya, namely Ponnai in the Karnataka *taluk*. This document is dated 5th August, 1725 A.D., during the reign of Mohamed Shah. We come to know from the inscriptions that the *matha* possessed villages and land as endowments. In 1710 A.D., Shri Vijayaranga Chokkanatha, the Nayak king, granted some land situated in a number of places on the banks of the Akhanda Kaveri and Coleroon for the maintenance of Brahmins and a *matha* which was a branch of the Kamakoti *pitha*.

According to tradition, the *matha* was shifted to Thanjavur due to the disturbed conditions during the Carnatic wars in the south. Later, it was shifted to Kumbakonam. Mackenzie's collections throw some light on this subject. Col. Mackenzie mentions that he met the then Shankaracharya of Kamakoti *pitha* there and saw a hundred and twenty five *sasanams* which were under the custody of the Shankaracharya[23].

Further, it is said that the *matha* was shifted to Kumbakonam during the reign of Raja Pratapa Simha of Thanjavur, and this is supported by a Modi record in the Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur. There is a petition made by a number of people in Thanjavur about the misdeeds of a *karyastha* of the *matha*. This document belongs to the period of Shri Mahendra Saraswati who ascended the Kamakoti *pitha* in the year 1851. A.D., during the time of the last king Shivaji of Thanjavur. The petitioners in their introductory paragraphs give a brief but interesting account of the *matha*[24].

The *matha* of Shri Shankaracharya at Kumbakonam was a small *matha* when it was at Kanchipuram. Raja Pratapa Simha brought the Shankaracharya from Kanchi and built an *agraharam* at Dabir, granted lands and offered him honour and respect.

Another public record refers to a court case belonging to the time of the 64th Acharya of the *matha*. In the rejoinder of the Shri Kanchi Kamakoti *matha*, the reasons for the shift of the *matha* are explained: "The plaintiff in column 20 of his reply states that if it is true that the Kamakoti *pitha* was established at Kanchipuram by Shankara and if Shankara's disciple was installed there, the first defendant should still be residing there only, and the reason for his residence at Kumbakonam has not been stated in the defendant's answer. It is not stated in any authoritative text that the Kamakoti *Pithadipati* must necessarily live only at Kanchi and should not take up his residence in any other place. The first defendant's disciples and other staff of the *matha* are still living in Kanchi and are still carrying on the daily *pooja* to the Sarvajna *pitha* there. The first defendant's Parama Guru (that is *guru's guru*) wanted to reside on the banks of the river Cauvery and hence came to reside on the banks of the Cauvery in Kumbakonam. He brought along with him the Yoga Lingachandramaulishvara-swami consecrated by Sureshvaracharya. The local *rajas* and other disciples afforded every facility and convenience to him and hence he used to alternate his residence between Kumbakonam and Kanchi".

The above gives the reason for the shift of the *matha*. This record belongs to the 64th Acharya, namely Shri Chandrashekharendra Saraswati. He was the head of the *pitha* from 1814 to 1851. A.D. His Parama Guru was the 62nd Acharya Shri Chandrashekharendra Sarasvati, who adorned the *pitha* from 1746 to 1783 A.D. It was this Acharya who shifted the headquarters in order to carry out his meditation. He attained *siddhi* in 1783 A.D. at Kumbakonam[25].

The shifting of the *matha* from Kanchi to Kumbakonam is assigned to Pratapa Simha, one of the Maratha rulers of Thanjavur, who was a great devotee of the Acharya. He ruled from 1740 A.D to 1768 A.D. The Modi document also mentions the fact that the king was a devotee of the Acharya. It is said that the *matha* was shifted to Kumbakonam in the later part of the 18th century A.D., on account of increasing Muhammedan trouble[26].

Though the *matha* was shifted to Kumbakonam, in the records of the *matha* they were mentioned as Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Pithadipatis. To quote a few: a *Nirman* of the Nawab of Arcot of 1792 A.D. mentions that Shri Kamakoti Shankaracharya be given all facilities while going to Thirupathi; a stone epigraph in Grantha in the Adi Kumbareshwara Swami temple at Kumbakonam mentions the 63rd Acharya, Shri Mahadevendra Saraswati, as Kanchi Pithavasi; a reference to *Inam* lands and *Inam* titles of the *matha* shows that lands in several villages round about Kanchi have been in the possession of the *matha*.

In all the *inams*, the original title of the grantee is written as Shri Kanchi Kamakoti *pitham*. This shows that the title was continued even after the *matha* was shifted to Kumbakonam.

It is clear that the *matha* occupied an important place in Tamilnadu. In the 20th century, the *matha* has forty one branches.

The Role of the Matha in Contemporary Society

The role of a *matha* as an institution is not restricted to the religious and philosophical spheres, but also extends to educational and social reforms. It is precisely this point which is exemplified in the Acharya's promotion of Shastraic learning. The Advaita Sabha was founded at Kumbakonam in 1896 A.D., and has since then conducted annual conferences, when examinations are conducted and prizes awarded, *Vakyarthas* are held and discourses delivered. The Diamond Jubilee of the Advaita Sabha was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the immediate presence of His Holiness at Shivasthanam, near Kanchi, in March 1956. The Golden Jubilee had been celebrated 10 years earlier at Kumbakonam and souvenirs had been published in English, Sanskrit and Tamil to mark the occassion.

Vedadhyanam has also received great impetus from His Holiness. Prizes have been instituted and even gifts of land are offered to those who give evidence of their proficiency in the *Vedas* and *Bhashyas*. In fact, the *matha* is maintaining *Veda pathashalas* which give free boarding and lodging to students in Kasi, Kanchi, Kumbakonam, Jambukeshwaram and Thanjavur. The latest pamphlet issued from the Kamakoti *matha*, tells us that *Veda pathashalas* under their jurisdiction exist in thirteen towns in Tamilnadu and in Kerala, in Andhra Pradesh, in Puri, one in Calcutta, five in Bihar, two in Uttar Pradesh, and three in Haryana. Teaching of *Jaiminiye Sama*, *Rig, Yajur, Atharvana, Sama* and *Shukla Yajur Vedas*, is done in *patashalas* in Kerala, Andhra, Orissa, Bengal Bihar, U.P. and Haryana respectively. To give training to the students in *Veda Bhashyam*, a trust was created on the eve of the *Shashtiabdhapoorthi* of Pithadipathi Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya, Shri Chandrashekarendra Sarasvathi Swamigal. Annual examinations are conducted for the students studying *Veda Bhashya* and three cash prizes of Rs.7,000/- Rs.5,000/- and Rs.3000/- are given away to the successful candidates in the order of merit. Further, for the protection and encouragement of the study of the *Vedas*, a Trust fed by public donations of Rs.18 per annum has been set up by the *matha*. On their birth day (*nakshatram* or star), holy *prasadam* from the north is sent to the donors each month. A sum ranging from Rs.2,000/- to Rs.5,000/- is given to the students on completion of their Vedic studies. Kalavar Brindavana Trust, founded to perpetuate the memory of the *guru* and the *Palana guri* of His Holiness, also runs *Vedapathashalas*.

By far the most popular religious movement is the *Thiruppavai tiruvembavai* movement which has served to popularise the immortal verses of Andal and Manikavachakar, even among boys and girls. This has proved a tremendous success and is being observed year after year with increasing enthusiasm. It is

His Holiness's wish that every one should spend at least a minute a day in Divine worship.

Among the social reforms His Holiness has effected may be mentioned the formation of the Manradhikari Sangam. Among the aims of this organisation may be mentioned

1. Social Service
2. Care of temples and their proper administration.
3. Congregation of people on *Ekadasi* days and conduct of Puranic discourses in Tamil.
4. Care of cows.
5. Planting trees and growing vegetables in public and private places.
6. Repairs of tanks and wells through voluntary labour.
7. Dissemination of fundamental knowledge of *Dharmas*.
8. Offering hospitality.

This movement has gone a long way to awaken social and civic consciousness among people.

A list in more specific terms runs thus: Advaita Sabha, founded to propagate the philosophy of Advaita honours old *vidwans*, encourages new ones, publishes a magazine titled *Brahma Vidya*. While Amarabharati Pariks, a *samiti* in Madras, teaches Sanskrit to the children, an office located at Thanjavur offers postal tuition for learning Sanskrit. Agamashilpa sadas convenes a conference on ancient art and culture once a year under the august presence of His Holiness. Its head office is situated at Kanchi, with 375 branches in Tamilnadu. There are four divisions of this *mandram*, one each for students, children, ladies and the general public.

Further, different ways and means of educating the public on Hindu culture and religious heritage are amply used by Oriental Higher Secondary schools in Madurai, Villupuram, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Mettur Dam, Pudukkottai, and Lalgudi. Free issue of booklets concerning special festivals, an Ayurveda Medical College at Coimbatore, a Hindu Theological College at Gajjalnaickenpatty, Salem, a religious training course for graduates and students, refresher courses for teachers in Hindu religious teachings and English medium schools which train pupils in Hindu religious matters have been established. Further, free *upanayanams*, free *kannika danams*, offer of *prasadam* in hospitals, the reformation of prisoners through the distribution of free booklets and literature, free prayer classes, cow protection sheds (cows are sacred to the Hindus) and assistance for the renovation of temples, are a few activities of the *matha* undertaken with the intention of cementing and

strengthening our ancient heritage, religion, social structure and promoting the moral and spiritual welfare of the people.

An organisation named Jeevatma. fulfils the following functions:

1. Cremation of unclaimed dead bodies

2. Helping in the cremation of the dead

3. Offer of financial aid for the last rites of the dead

Shri Adi Shankara Advaita Research Centre in Madras publishes the works of Shri Shankara, as well as a quarterly English magazine called the *Voice of Shankara* on Advaita philosophy and *Veda Shastras*. It has endowed six scholarships for students of the *Vedas*. The promotion of Hinduism was further aided by the World Hindu Council, convened in March, 1976, with a subsequent conference in Kanchi in 1977. Branches of this have now spread all over the world.

The Kamakoti *pitha* (Kanchi *math*), tries to revitalise Indian education, temple worship and social life. In general, the senior Acharya of Kanchi, Shri Chandrashekharendra Sarasvati, has called for the training of young men in the *Agamas, Vedas*, as well as arts, crafts and temple worship.

The Kanchi Vidyapitha, through the Advaita Sabha, works for the propagation of *Vedanta* through publications and conferences. Both Shaiva and Vaishnava scholars gather there for discussions on issues of *Vedanta*. Academic titles are awarded on these occasions to competent traditional scholars. The Kanchi *matha* has restored many temples in South India, especially in villages and the countryside, where they were neglected.

The Pontiff follows the path of Adi Shankara, who spent most of his life travelling on foot throughout India, and keeps the spirit of India aflame and alive.

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE ECONOMY OF MEDIEVAL KANCHIPURAM

by

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The economic activities of Kanchipuram are traceable to the early centuries of the Christian era. The *Perumpanatruppadai,*[1] a work of the Sangam age, datable to the first century A.D., mentions the ruler of Kanchipuram as Kachchiyon. The work also informs us that the city had broad streets, but due to the frequent running of chariots they had developed pot-holes. The city had a market also, but no useful information is available from the work. The colophons appended to the *Sangam* poems suggest that Kanchipuram was a commercial centre from the first century A.D. Many of the colophons [2] mention the ancient city of Kanchipuram as Kachchippedu. The suffix *pedu* in the name could be explained as a place where the workers or producers and merchants lived and performed their occupations.

The excavations conducted here have brought to light some artefacts like spindle whorls, iron and gold objects, besides different kinds of pottery and terracotta images. The finished objects were mostly transported to markets for local consumption. Satavahana coins of the first two centuries A.D. and coin moulds of the Satavahanas were found in the excavations.[3] Moulds of the punch- marked coins were also discovered, suggesting the use of coins in this area. All these support the view that brisk trade and economic activities existed from the beginning of the Christian era in Kanchipuram.

The Chinese writer Pan Kou of the second century B.C. mentions the existence of trade relations between the country of Houang Tohe (Kanchipuram) and China[4]. The articles of trade included pearls and precious stones which were exchanged for gold and silk. Poduca (Pondicherry) and Sopatma (Marakkanam), the two port cities located very near to the city of Kanchipuram, mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, can easily be reached from Kanchipuram. Both the port cities had good trade relationships with the Mediterranean countries.[5]

Kanchipuram was conferred with the special status of *nagaram*. The Tamil form of the word *nagaram/nagar* has a special meaning and significance. These names could refer to a mercantile settlement and also to its administrative body. Kanchipuram seems to have attained this special status of *nagar* at a very early age. In the *Manimekalai*, the city is referred to as Kanchimaanagar. The activities of the *nagaram* assembly during this period were not known. However, from the Pallava period, we may notice the functioning of the *nagaram* and its becoming an important segment of the city. The members of the *nagaram* assembly had participated in the selection and installation of the Pallava king. The label inscriptions of Nandivarman II found in the temple of Vaikunthaperumal,[6] mentions the city as Kanchipuram *nagara* and that the

members of the *nagara* assembly were among those who received the future king Nandivarman II at the city's gates. They seem to have functioned with other members, namely, Mahasamantas, Mulaprakritis and Kadaka Muttaraiyar. During the rule of the Chola king Uttamachola, the members of the *nagara* decided on some administrative matters of the Uragam (Ulagalanda Perumal) temple.

We have some evidence regarding the markets of Kanchipuram. An inscription of Nandivarman II from the Ulagalanda Perumal temple[7] speaks about the establishment of a market in Kanchipuram. The market could have been located near the Ulagalanda Perumal temple. In 864 A.D. the market was established with the permission of the ruling king. The inhabitants of the Videlvidugu Kudiraichcheri were permitted to sell articles varying from *karpuram* (camphor) to *cheruppu* (foot wear) in that market. The permission in this case was granted on a request made by an officer, Anuttarappallavaraiyan. Another officer, Kadupattigal Tamilapperaraiyan, executed the orders. About the inhabitants of the Videlvidugu Kudiraichcheri, no details are available from the inscription. However, from the name it could be explained as a settlement of royal horsemen. Since they were the members of the king's regiment, the new settlement could have been created and permission granted to establish shops in the settlement.

Among the producers, weavers and oil pressers predominate in the economic activity. Kanchipuram was traditionally known for its textile products. We have some evidence of the production of textiles from the late Pallava period. Four weaving quarters are known to have functioned in the time of Uttamachola.[8] The weavers were known by the name *pattusalins*. The four quarters they lived in were Karuvulanpadu, Kamsagappadi, Atimanappadi and Erruvalichcheri. These *pattusalin* weavers were patronised by the king. The weavers of the four *cheris* were said to have produced cloth for royal consumption (*rajavastra*). There is another quarter, namely Cholaniyamam, mentioned as belonging to the king. Though the occupation of the inhabitants of this quarter is not clear from the inscription, we may presume that they were also weavers. The Tamil portion of the inscription says that this quarter belonged to the king (*devar cheri*) and that the people in this quarter were very much reduced in number during the rule of Uttamachola. The weavers were very poor and therefore it was stipulated that they were to pay a lesser quantity of tax and their accounts were to be supervised by the members of the other four quarters. The reasons for their poverty and subordinate position are not fully explained in the record. However, from the sequence of events, we may presume that these weavers produced cloth for royal consumption from the days of the Pallavas, since Kanchipuram was the capital city of the Pallava rulers. When the Pallavas declined, royal support for the weavers also declined. The political instability that followed in the last years of the Pallava rule and the Chola occupation at the end could not improve the condition of the weavers in any appreciable

manner. Therefore the weavers, not getting enough encouragement, must have dwindled in numbers and also become poor. Perhaps in order to alleviate their distress, the *nagara* members, the officers and the king initiated action to provide support.

Many weaving quarters of the Chola period are known. Among the quarters occupied by the Saliyar, a group among the weavers, the following four may be mentioned: Arumolidevan *peruntheru*, Rajarajan *peruntheru*, Nigarilichola *peruntheru*, and Kuraivaniya *peruntheru*. The first three quarters were named after the titles of Rajaraja I. The last one was named after a type of cloth (*kurai*) produced by the weavers. Since the first three quarters bear the titles of Rajaraja I, they could have been founded during the time of Rajaraja I. These three weaving settlements continued till the end of the Chola rule. All these quarters could be located in the neighbourhood of the Kayarohana temple. The Arumolidevan *peruntheru* and Rajarajan *peruntheru* were also occupied by the merchants. Different types of cloth were produced in Kanchipuram. They are *sutGruppudavai, niravadippudavai, pavadaippudavai, uttariya* and *kurai*.

The Sankarapadiyar or the community of the oil pressers was another important community which functioned in medieval Kanchipuram. During the days of Uttama Chola, the Sankarapadiyar lived in three quarters, namely Ranjayapadi, Ekavirapadi and Vamanasankarapadi. Since they lived in three quarters they could have produced considerable quantities of oil. During the reign of Rajaraja I, the oil producers lived in Mummudichola *perunteru* also.

Temples in Kanchipuram received grants from several residents from different regions. Land and valuables were donated by persons hailing from Kaliyurkottam, Venkunrakkottam, Damalkottam, Chengattukkottam, Manayilkottam, Puliyurkkottam, Chemburkkottam and Urrukkattukkottam in Tondaimandalam. All the above regions were located adjacent to the city of Kanchipuram. Residents from Naduvil *nadu*, another neighbouring region comprising the Thirukoyilur *taluk* in the South Arcot district, also made some endowments. Grants were also made by individuals from Cholamandalam. Individuals from Nellore *nadu*, Malaimandalam and Pandimandalam have also endowed gifts. Pilgrims coming from far off places like Motupalli, Dvarasamudra, Posalanadu and Cuttack have also made endowments. These grants could have led to an increased flow of outside capital into the city of Kanchipuram over a period of four hundred years.

A mention must be made of the functioning of the banking system in Kanchipuram. Gold, money and, sometimes, paddy were received as capital, and the interest was utilised chiefly for burning perpetual lamps. The recipients of the principal were the temples and local bodies and, rarely, individuals. The interest was paid in gold and sometimes in paddy. During the period of Kampavarman, 24 *kalanjus* of gold yielded an annual interest of one *kalanju* and four *manjadis*.[9] This works out to an interest rate of about five percent,

which seems to be a very low rate of interest. In a second case, during Parakesarivarman's rule, 20 *kalanjus* of gold yielded 800 *kadi* (tonnes) of paddy per annum. Various rates are available from other inscriptions which are tabulated below:

Amount recd. as capital (in *kalanju*)	Interest (per annum) (in paddy) (*Kadi-tuni*)	rate per *kalanju* (in *nali*)
20	800	1280
50	200	
50		
250	500	
50	180	

The difference in the interest rates are not easily understandable. The purity of gold could have been an important factor in deciding the interest rate. Pure gold could have attracted more interest. However, the purity of the gold is not known in all the above cases.

The inscriptions of Kanchipuram also refer to workers and their wages. The workers are mostly connected with the temples. They were paid in paddy as well as in gold. To some categories of workers an allowance for their dress was also paid. The following is a short list of workers and their wages.[10]

Name of worker	Wage (per *diem*) (in *nalis*)	dress allowance (per annum) (in *kalanjus*)
1. *Veda Brahmana*	16	5
2. *Mani* (*Brahmana* student)	6	1
3. *Thirumeykaval* (temple watchman)	8	2
4. *Nandavanam uluvan* (cultivator)	6	1/2
5. *Thirumanjana nir sumaippan* (sacred water supplier)	3	--
6. *Thiruvaradanai cheyvan* (conductor of *puja*)	10	--

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THE MUSIC HERITAGE OF KANCHI

by

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Music and religion are closely related to each other. The composers of music, who were all devotees of God, have emphasised the fact that a life spent without praising Him and without offering *puja* to him is a wasted life.

Purandaradasa in one of his songs has said:

Hariya nene yada nara janma veke ?
Hariya kondadada nalige eke..?

(What is the use of one's birth as a human being if one does not think of Hari? What is the use of the tongue if it does not praise Hari?)

In the last *charana* he writes,

Nalina nabha Sri Purandara Vitthala
Cheluva murtiya nodada kangalu etake?

(What is the use of the eyes which cannot see God?)

Thus, all the composers have emphasised the fact that each and every action of ours should be dedicated to the Almighty.

Therefore it is no wonder that Kanchipuram, a city of temples, inspired the composers to sing in praise of the Gods and Goddesses enshrined here.

It was mainly the patronage extended by the rulers of Kanchipuram to art and architecture by constructing temples that sowed the seed for the growth of art and music in Kanchipuram.

Of the three dynasties, the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Vijayanagara kings who ruled over this place, it was the Pallava kings, for whom Kanchipuram was the capital city, who laid the foundation for all the arts by constructing temples of all faiths and making gifts of land for the performances of various rituals in which music played an important role.

The Cholas, who ruled from the 10th to the 13th centuries, and the Vijayanagara kings, who ruled from the 14th to the 17th centuries, followed their predecessors in this regard.

Musicians and dancers were appointed in all the temples thus constructed. The dancers, called *devadasis*, who were proficient in music and dance, were appointed to sing and dance before the deity every day and to accompany the deity in processions. There were *nadaswaram* players in each temple.

Besides dancers and musicians, Oduvars were appointed in Shaiva temples to sing *Thevaram* hymns. In Vishnu temples, the reciters of the *Divyaprabandham*,

called Vinnappam Seivar, were appointed. The Araiyars were appointed to sing *prabandhas* in a particular *raga* and *tala* in front of the deity. Besides appointed musicians, eminent musicians were also invited to perform during the festivals.

Besides the activities which were carried out around the temple premises, almost all the composers who went on a pilgrimage to any sacred place have included Kanchipuram in their itinerary and have sung in praise of the Gods and Goddesses enshrined in the various temples at Kanchipuram.

The composers were overwhelmed with joy even at the sight of the Almighty and the songs poured out of them spontaneously.Appar, Sundarar and Jnanasambandar, who were the earliest composers, visited the Shiva temples and sang in praise of the Almighty. It was due to the efforts of Appar that the great Pallava king, Mahendravarman I, who was at first a Jaina, later became a Shaivite.

Of the 12 *Alwars*, 5 of them, namely, Thirumangai Alwar, Peyalwar, Bhutatalwar, Tirumazhisai Alwar and Nammalwar have sung in praise of the deities at Kanchipuram. Altogether, there are 68 *pasurams* sung by them in praise of 14 deities. Among them, Thirumangai Alwar has sung the maximum number of *pasurams* i.e., 46, Peyalwar has sung 10, Thirumazhisai Alwar 7, Bhuthathalwar 3, Poigai 1 and Nammalwar 2.

Most of the songs composed by these *Alwars* are in praise of Thiruvekha, Ashtabhujam, Thiruparameshwara Vinnagaram and Thirukachchi Athigiri (Varadarajaswami).

These compositions were compiled, classified and set to time by Nadamuni, the disciple of Nammalwar, who flourished in the last quarter of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century. However, only a few temples have retained the practice of singing hymns. They are mostly recited by the *ghotis*.

Once Purandaradasa went on a pilgrimage to Kanchipuram and, overwhelmed with joy at the sight of Varadaraja Swami, burst out into song:

Kannare kande nachchutano Kanchi
Punyakoti kariraja varadane.

Kshetrajna, the famous composer of *pada*, is said to have composed 20 *padas* on Varadaraja Swami with Kanchi Varada as the hero.

Muthuswami Dikshitar, one among the Carnatic trinity, has composed *kritis* in praise of both Shiva and Vishnu. He is said to have composed 20 *kritis* in praise of the deities of Kanchipuram, out of the 462 *kritis* published by Mr.Sundaram Iyer. They include compositions in praise of Goddess Kamakshi, Lord Ekambranatha Swami, Kailasanatha Swami, and Varadaraja Swami. He has also composed *kritis* in praise of Goddess Sarasvathi who is also said to be in the form of the river Vegavati at Kanchipuram. Some of the popular *kritis* are

Nirajakshi Kamakshi in *hindola*, *Kanjadalayatakshi* in *kamalamanohari* and *Kamakshi* in *simhendra madhyama*.

Ekambranatha Swami is enshrined in Kanchipuram, which is one of the *Panchalinga Sthalas*. Here the Linga is worshipped as one of the *Panchabhutas* or 5 elements and is called the *Prithvi Linga*. In this *kriti*, we find *Linga Mudra*, *Raga Mudra*, *Sthala Mudra* and *Vaggeyakara Mudra*.

The *kriti*, *Kailasanthena* in *kambhoji raga*, is a popular *kriti* in praise of Kailasanatha Swami. There is one more *kriti* in the *vegavahini raga*.

Of his *kritis* on Varadaraja Swami, the *kriti* in *saranga*, *Varadarajamupasmahe*, is famous. The other *kriti*, *Varadaraja pahi* is in *sankarabharana*.

Dikshitar also is said to have provided music for the *Ramashtapadi* composed by Upanishad Brahmam of Kanchipuram.

Thyagaraja came to Kanchipuram at the invitation of Upanishad Brahmam. Here he sang *Varada navanitasapatu* in *raga panjaram*, in chapu tala.

On *Garudotsava* day, when he had a *darshan* of the Lord, Thyagaraja sang *Varadarajaninnu kori* in the *raga svarabhushani*, a rare *raga*. In this *kriti* he describes the grandeur of *Garudaseva*.

Vinayakuni in *Madhyamavati raga* in praise of Goddess Kamakshi is a famous *kriti*.

Shyama Shastri has composed songs only in praise of Goddess Kamakshi. Shyama Shastri's fore-fathers were the *archakas* of *Bangaru* Kamakshi, the golden image of goddess Kamakshi of Kanchipuram. In the 16th century, due to political disturbances, they went in search of a safe place for the installation of the idol. It was taken to various places and finally came to Thanjavur. It is in praise of this Goddess that Shyama Shastri composed his *kritis*. Out of 70 *kritis* published by Mrs.Vidya Shankar in 3 volumes, 39 are in praise of this deity. Of the above compositions, there are four *gitas*, three *svarajatis* and three *varnas*. His *gitas* have two *aksharas* for each count and not one *akshara* as usually found. His *svarajatis* are high class compositions full of *raga bhava*. He has eliminated *jatis* and phrases after the model of *jatis* which is the important feature of *svarajatis*. His *svarajatis* are sung in concerts also.

The *kriti*, *Devi brovasamayamide* in *Chintamani raga* which is created by Shyama Shastri, is in praise of Goddess Kamakshi.

Composers of the post Thyagaraja period

Famous among the composers of the post - Thyagaraja period were Subbaraya Shastri, Annasami Shastri, Mysore Sadasiva Rao and Cheyyur Chengalvaraya Shastri.

Subbaraya Shastri (1803-1863), son of Shyama Shastri, lived in Kanchipuram for some time and it was during his stay here that he composed the famous *kriti Emaninne* in *mukhari raga, adi tala*. He refers to the place in the *charana* as *Vara Kanchipura Vasini*. The *kriti Shankarineevani* in *begada*, is a popular *kriti*. There is a reference to the place as Kanchisadana in the *kriti*.

Annasami Shastri (1827-1900), the adopted son of Subbaraya Shastri, has composed a *varna, Karuna Katakshi* in *todi raga, adi tala*. He has also composed four *kritis* in praise of goddess Kamakshi:

Kriti	*Raga*	*Tala*
Sri Lalithe	*Bhairavi*	*Adi*
Paramapavani	*Athana*	*Adi*
Sri Kamakshi	*Saranga*	*Adi*
Sri Kanchinavike	*Asaveri*	*Rupaka*

Mysore Sadashiva Rao, the disciple of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, went on a pilgrimage to many places. He composed four *kritis* in praise of goddess Kamakshi. *Shri Kamakoti Pitasthithe* in *saveri* is a popular one.

In praise of Ekambranatha Swami, he composed *Samrajya dayake* in *kambhoji raga*.

Cheyyur Chengalvaraya Shastri (1810-1900) is said to have composed 360 *kritis* in praise of Goddess Kamakshi out of a total of 1000 *kritis*. Some of his *kritis* are:

Kriti	*Raga*	*Tala*
Entavedinagai	*Darbar*	*Chapu tale*
Emamma ninave	*Surati*	*Adi*
Neeruchi marugina rasana	*Bilahari*	*Adi*

Thus, there are thousands of compositions in praise of the deities enshrined in the various temples at Kanchipuram.

Compositions of all types, such as *Thevaram, Divya prabandham, gita, varna, devaranama, kriti, pada* etc., have been composed.

Besides a number of composers, Kanchipuram has also produced many performers. Among them the most famous are the Kanchipuram Dhanakoti sisters and Kanchipuram Naina Pillai.

Dhanakoti Sisters

Dhanakoti Ammal and her sister Kamakshi Ammal, known as the Dhanakoti sisters, were popular musicians of the early 19th century. They were the

disciples of Kachchi Shastri, the great grandson of Shyama Shastri. They also learnt music under Ettayapuram Ramachandra Bhagavatar who came often to Kanchipuram to teach them.

Kanchipuram Naina Pillai alias Subramanya Pillai (1887-1934), a famous musician of the first half of this century, was the son of Kanchipuram Kamakshi Ammal, the sister of Dhanakoti Ammal. He was a *kirtana vidwan* and a *pallavi vidwan*. He used to sing *pallavis* in some of the ancient *talas* like 108 *talas*. The credit of popularising *Thiruppugazh* hymns by setting them to time goes to him. He used to celebrate Thyagaraja *utsavam* in Kanchi on a grand scale for five days in which almost all the leading *vidwans* of recent times participated.

K.V.Srinivasa Iyengar, the author of books on Thyagaraja like *Thyagaraja Hridayam, Gana Bhaskara,* etc., is also a composer who has composed with the *mudra* Thyagaraja. The *kriti Vinatasuta*, a famous *kriti* in *harikambhodi*, gives the description of the *Garudotsava*.

Thus, the antiquity and the sanctity of the temples of Kanchipuram and the patronage extended are recorded in the music of the great singers throughout their existence.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE SCULPTURES AT KANCHI

by

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Stone sculpture made its appearance in the city of Kanchi during the Pallava period, around the 7th century A.D. But, unlike many other centres which went into oblivion after the fall of a kingdom, Kanchi continued to flourish as a centre of art under successive dynasties like those of the Cholas, Pandyas, and Vijayanagara. In the process, it emerged as one of the most multi-faceted, artistic centres of India. The patronage extended by the royal court, religious institutions like the temple and private patrons helped the growth of art in the city.

The basis for sculptural art and iconography was largely religious, but many secular themes like dance, scenes of processions and battle scenes were also included. The artists portrayed many subjects from contemporary life. They provide illuminating insights into the ancient social and artistic traditions. The musical panels displayed in these reliefs are not imaginary. Early literature refers to the existence of musical instruments of different types. Some of these instruments have undergone changes and new ones have evolved, some have come down to us with a few modifications and some without any changes. A study of the relief panels reveals the process of evolution they underwent in the course of time. The temples at Kanchi, with a history of a thousand years and more, display quite a large number of musical instruments that were prevalent at various times during their construction. Following the ancient tradition, we can classify the musical instruments into four groups such as stringed (*thata*), wind blown (*sushira*), covered with skin (*avanaddha*) and solid (*ghana*).

Stringed Instruments

The origin of the stringed instrument is traced back to the primitive hunting bow, the *gourd* harp and the bamboo zithers. *The Rig Veda* mentions the musical instrument, *gargara*. C.H. Tarlekar is of the opinion that the stringed musical instrument mentioned in the *Rig Veda* is the arched type of harp that produced a *gargara* sound. He further states that it may resemble the bow-shaped harp found in the sculptures at Sanchi, Barhut and Amaravati.

The Tamil epic *Silappadikaram*, refers to the stringed instrument *yazh* with 21, 19, 14 and 7 strings. The setting of *Perumpanatruppadai* at Kanchi shows the popularity of the *yazh* with larger strings, in the area around. From around the 5th century A.D., two other stringed instruments, one with an ovoid resonator and a long neck similar to the mandolin and the other the *ektara* type, appeared in the sculptures of India. The presence of these two musical instruments, coupled with the absence of the bow-shaped *yazh* in the art of the Pallavas, shows the popularity they had gained over the harp. Rajasimha, in his

inscription from the Kailasanatha temple, equates himself with Tumburu in his knowledge of musical instruments and with Narada in the playing of the *veena*. He justified his claim by profuse sculptures of musical panels in the main and *prakara* niches of the temple.

The present paper identifies the following eight types of *veenas* from the sculptures of Shaivaite temples at Kanchi: the *ghoshaka*, *kachchapi*, smaller *kinnari, pinaka, tambura, alapini, svaramandala* and *karnatik sitar*.

Ghoshaka Veena

The paintings and sculptures at Ajanta, Badami, Mahabalipuram and Kanchi reveal the presence of a *veena* with a gourd either full or half- full at the top. The gourd is attached to the veena held in the hands of the dancing Shiva at Badami Cave No.1 and the Vinadhara Shiva at Kailasanatha. The *ghoshaka veena* at Kanchi is of the half-gourd variety (plate 32). The half-gourd is fixed to the upper part of the *danda*. The *veena* is probably the *ektara* type. The classical text on dance, *Bharata Natyashastra*, mentions a one- stringed *veena* by the name *ghoshaka*. It had a gourd at the upper end. G.H.Tarlekar opines that the *ektarà veena* found in the sculptures of Badami and Ajanta may be the *ghoshaka* mentioned in the *Natyashastra*. The *veena* is played by keeping the gourd near the chest and pressing its base with the third finger of the right hand. According to Tarlekar, the *ghoshaka veena* had only a few notes in the earlier periods, but with the development of the finger technique of playing, it could sound all the notes. The numerous representations of this *veena* in large numbers in the sculptures of the Pallavas reveal its popularity in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D.

Kachchapi Veena

The seventh outer niche on the northern *prakara* of the Kailasanatha temple contains a female figure with a *veena* in her hand. The *veena* is of a guitar type with a pear-shaped body and a short neck. Bharata mentions a *veena* of a similar type as *kachchapi* due to its body having the shape of the back of a tortoise (fig.2). This type of *veena* may contain four or five strings. The strings of the *kachchapi veena* are generally plucked by the fingers of the right hand and played with the fingers of the left hand.

A variety of the one-stringed *veena*, similar to the modern violin, figures in two panels from the Kailasanatha Temple. The *veena* is held in the palm of the left hand and played with the bow held in the other hand. Several scholars have traced the origin of the violin to this early instrument.

Kinnari Veena

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FROM THE SCULPTURES AT KANCHI



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3

1. KINNARI VEENA
2. KACHAPI VEENA
3. PINAKI
4. SVARAMANDALA
5. WINDPIPE

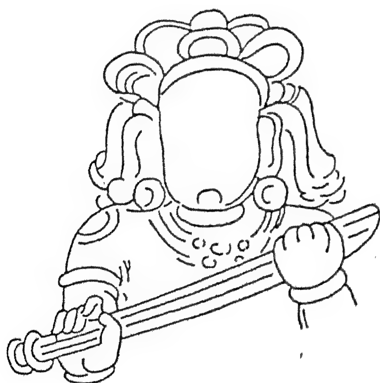


Fig 4

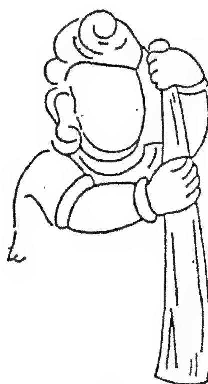
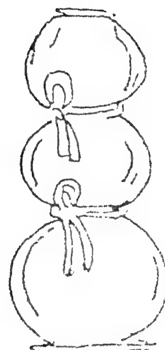


Fig 5



Fig 6



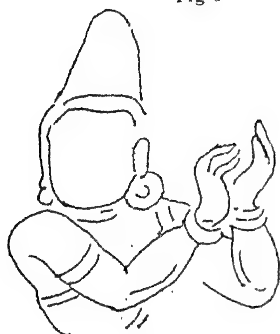


Fig 8

6. DARDURA

7. DARDURA (POT DRUMS)

8. TALAGHA

9. VERTICAL DRUMS OF SIMILAR HEIGHT

10. VERTICAL DRUMS OF DIFFERENT HEIGHTS



Fig 9



Fig 10

There are two kinds of *Kinnari veenas*, one with two gourds and the other with three gourds. Accordingly, they are called smaller *kinnari* and larger *kinnari* (fig.1)

The stringed instrument found on the Harihara and Gangadhara panels on the main wall of the Kailasanatha temple is a *veena* with two gourds. G.H.Tarlekar mentions the *kinnari veena* found in the sculptures of the Belur temple (12th century A.D.) as one of the earliest representations available in Indian art. But the presence of a similar *veena* in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi takes its antiquity further back to the time of the Pallavas.ry A.D.).

Veena Alapini

Veena alapini is a single-stringed *veena* with a gourd at the top end (plates 31 & 33). Two different names are given to this *veena* by the old authors. While Someshvara and Parvadeva call it *lavanika*, Nanyadeva and Sarangadeva name it *alapini*.

The *veena alapini* occurs in both the Ekambaranatha and Kamakshi temple.The Dakshinamurthi panel in the Ekambaranatha temple illustrates a *veena* without a gourd. G.H.Tarlekar is of the view that the *veena* of this type occurs in the sculptures of the later phase of the early medieval period. It is probable that this *veena* is a prototype of the later *svaramandala* found in the medieval sculptures of India.

The *veena alapini* made its appearance in the sculptures of the Hoysalas at Belur. The presence of the similar *veena* in the panels of Ekambaranatha and Kamakshi temples reveals the influence of the Karnataka region in the medieval art of Kanchi.

Tambura

The *tambura* is a stringed instrument like the *veena*, which is used as an accompaniment while singing. It is usually held vertically by the singer. The *veena* in the hands of the Goddess Saraswati in the Anantashayi panel of the Kailasanatha temple looks like the *tambura* with a half-gourd or wood at the lower end. The instrument is held not vertically but horizantally on the lap of the singer.

Svarnamandala & Karnatik Sitar

The string instruments *svaramandala* (fig.4) and *Karnatik sitar* are found Ekambaranatha temple. The word *sitar* denotes three strings. The neck in the *Karnatik sitar* is thinner and shorter than the ordinary *sitar*. It is usually shaped somewhat like a *tambura* with the body of the instrument being made either of wood or gourd. The tone of the *Karnatik sitar* is soft and sweet and, being confined in intonation, nearly resembles that of the mandolin. The *veena* in the

hands of Tumburu and Narada in the Tripurantaka panel of the Ekambranatha temple is the *Karnatik sitar*.

Wind Instruments

There were three types of wind instruments. They were the conch (*shankha*), the flute and the pipe (fig.5). Bharata mentions the flute as a major wind instrument and the *shankha* and the *thundaki* as minor ones.

The flute is made of bamboo or reed and its other names are *vamsha* or *venu*. The presence of the flute along with *the veena* in the musical panels at Kanchi shows the importance the instrument had in the early period.

The conch, which is regarded as auspicious, is found in the sculptures of Kanchi, not as a separate wind instrument but as an attribute of Vishnu. The third type of wind instrument is the wind pipe found in the Kailasanatha temple. It is long like the trumpet. A similar type of instrument is seen in the sculptures of the Gupta temple at Bhumara and the Chalukyan temple at Badami.

Percussion Instruments

The *Shata Rudriya* invokes Shiva as the sound of the musical instrument *dundubhi*. References to *dundubhi* as a musical instrument are made in the *Vedas* and other early literature. The *bhumi dundubhi*, another percussion instrument, is made by making a hole in the gourd and covering it tightly with a hide. The *dundubhi* is played with a stick. Bharata refers to the *mridanga*, *panva* and *dardura* as major percussion instruments.

At Kanchi, we are able to distinguish six types of percussion instruments. Of these, three belong to the Pallava period, two to the later period and one belongs to both the periods. They are the *dardura*, two vertical drums corresponding to the modern *daya* and *baya*, the *damaru*, the *mridala* and the *hudukka*.

is a *ghatam*-like instrument with the face measuring about nine inches (fig. 6). In one of the dance panels at Kailasanatha temple, Tandu is shown playing the *dardura* during the *lalata tilaka* dance of Shiva (on the south western end of the small shrine). The other one is the *ananda-tandava* panel containing a variation of the *dardura*, wherein three drums of a similar type are placed one above the other and played by the *Ganas* to the dance of the goddess (fig. 7). A percussion instrument of this type is seen in the sculptures of Badami and Pattadakkal.

The dance panels from the Pallava temples at Kanchi reveal two different types of vertical drums, drums of similar heights and the other of different heights (fig.10). The trans-regional character of these percussion instruments is revealed by their presence in the art of the Guptas, Vakatakas, Chalukyas and Pallavas. The vertical drums of similar heights are found in the dance panel

from Pawaye-(Gupta, 5th century A.D.) and at Ellora (cave no. 4, Vakataka, 6th century A.D). The other type is found in the sculptural panel at Sirpur (Gupta, 5th century A.D.) and in the Badami cave no.1 of the Chalukyas.

While the circumference of the vertical drums of similar height found in the Gupta and Vakataka sculptures are equal in proportion, in the Pallava sculptures the one on the right side is broader in circumference than the other (fig. 9). The instruments are to be placed vertically in front of the player who plays it with crossed hands. G.H.Tarlekar is of the view that the instruments correspond to modern *daya* and *baya* and are considered as a forerunner of the modern *tabla* of Hindustani music.

Damaru

The *damaru* (*udukkai* in Tamil) is a hour glass-shaped musical instrument drawn with knotted threads. The shell of the *damaru* is made of brass, wood or clay. By shaking the instrument sideways, a rattling sound is produced. Right along the middle, a tape passes over the twin threads. By pressing hard on this tape, the tone of the instrument can be made to alter. As a musical instrument, the *damaru* is found in the sculptures portraying the *Bhairava* and *nritta* forms of Shiva.

The *mridala* and *hudukka* found in the Ekambranatha temple are of a later period. The body of the *mridala* is of wood, about 15 inches long with the central part slightly broad. The drum is tied at the waist and played by hand. The *mridala* present in the sculpture is of the *muraja* type as the face of the instrument looks shorter than the normal one. The *hudukka* is like the *damaru* in shape, but is larger in size than the *damaru*. The parchment is plain and is attached to a wooden body more or less as in the *damaru*. However, there are no knotted threads and hence this is not a rattle drum. The heads are struck with the hands or with sticks.

Solid (Ghana) Instruments

The musical panel in the Kailasanatha temple contains a seated figure clapping the hands. Panini mentions the *panisha* and the *talagha* (fig. 8) as ways to keep time by the rhythmic clapping of hands. Bharata mentions the cymbals as a *ghana* instrument. A pair of cymbals supplied the rhythm. The two discs had holes at the centres through which strings passed. They were held in the hands and struck together to produce resonant strokes. The cymbals are of two types, one having the shape of a circular disc and the other shaped like a small cup. Both the types are found in the Pallava sculptures at Kanchi. The cymbals are made of bell metal. Two bells or *ghantas* are seen in the sculptures, one in the Kailasanatha temple and the other in the Ekambranatha temple. The *ghanta* is 6 inches long, half an *angula* at the base and broad at the end. By shaking it and keeping the face downwards, the small iron ball hanging inside the centre strikes the inner surface of the bell and produces a ringing sound.

FESTIVALS IN KANCHI

by

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The main purpose of festivals is to explain the basic elements of the Hindu calendar, including principles of dating festivals and to elucidate aspects of the structural logic underlying the rhythm of ritual action. Festivals constitute a necessary aspect of any religion. Besides the benefits which are purely religious, they make for group- feeling and participation and channelize the individual energy towards a common social concern. They are especially important in Indian religions, both in households and in communities. Joint families and rural communities encouraged these festivals for social, economic and spiritual purposes. The temple being essentially a collective institution and a centre of social interaction, great significance is attached to festivals, for festivals attract more crowds than daily worship or philosophy.

There are certain festivals which are common to all Vishnu and Shiva temples and are celebrated round the year. However, due to variations, adaptations and improvisations, some festivals assume a local tinge. There are the *Avatara utsavas* peculiar to each temple dedicated to the Alwar associated with the origin of the temple, or being the birth place of some *Alwar, Acharya* or *Nayanmar - Avatara sthalas*. Thus there are generic and non-generic festivals. A co-ordination is ascertained between the *sthalapurana* legends and its influence on sculptures, rituals and festivals of the respective temples. Besides festivals for gods and goddesses and those for the *Alwars* and *Nayanmars*, there were, in previous centuries, also royal festivals instituted in the names of kings and queens. It is generally noted that in addition to royal benefactions, the temples were also patronised by the common people, merchant guilds, traders and others who instituted the festivals for the general welfare. In course of time, certain festivals assumed religious and political overtones. Therefore, festivals are of a varied nature in temples and, even here, *Agamas* differ between a Shaiva and a Vaishnava temple.

Within the system, there can be a non-homogenity of time and element. Hindu festivals act as temporal makers by which the latent potentialities of the moment are actualized or controlled. Ritual activity on the socio-cultural plane manifests Hindu conceptions of human and cosmic values on an idealogical plane. Thus, Hindu festivals and the calender correspond to what Levi Strauss has called the "lived in" and "thought orders of reality" in a clean differentiation from each other.

Dates of festivals are expressed by giving the name of the month, the fortnight (*shukla paksha or Krishna* paksha) and the number of the *thithi*. For example, *Shayanotsava*, the festival of the sleeping (Vishnu), is celebrated on *Ashadha* (month), *Shukla* (fortnight), and *ekadashi* (the 11th *thithi*). Easily reckoned is

the a festival when it fall on a new or full moon of any given month, then with waning or waxing Amavasya or *Poornima* alone is sufficient indicators . Thus, *Karthikai deepam* occurs on *Krithika* (*poornima*).

The term festival is translated as *utsava. Utsava* is variously said to denote that activity which serves as a "remover of misery" or as a "remover of obstacles" and as that which takes away *samsara* and the like.

According to the Agamic texts, there are three classes of *utsavas*, all of which are treated at length. In the first place, there are the *nitya* rites which are to be celebrated daily in temple. It include *puja* or *archana*, daily chantings to the temple deities, and regular rituals celebrated in observance of the new moon, *on ekadasi* and *dvadasi* days and of certain star-days each month. References to *utsavas* in this sense of an on-going, regular, daily and/or monthly rites celebrated in a temple are plentiful in Agamic literature.

A review of the various festivals taking place in the course of the year in the temples of Kanchi is interesting. From any inscriptional and/or literary references to these temples, many of these festivals have been found to be going on for several centuries. In earlier stages, they seem to have been done on a smaller scale. But, from about the 15th or 16th century, the festivals and celebrations increased in number and grandeur. Numerous royal grants have been recorded, while other private benefactors have their names entered for due recognition..

Chitra (April)

An important festival in Kanchipuram during this month is the *Thiruavatara uthsavam* of the Arulalaperumal temple, marking the *avatara* of Shri Varadaraja on the *hasta* star when the Lord is believed to have manifested himself before Brahma from a sacrificial altar. The important feature of this festival is that on the full-moon day of this month, i.e. *chitrapournami*, Lord Varadaraja is taken in procession to the banks of the river Palar for the *Nadathari utsavam*. People throng in thousands to witness the Brahma *aradhana* or Brahma's worship of Lord Varadaraja re-enacted on this occassion. An epigraph dated A.D.1595, mentions this festival as *Thiruvural,* probably because of the celebration of this festival on the river bed.

Two epigraphs dated Saka 1471 and Saka 1473 make provision for the celebration of the *Thoppu Thirunal* and the *Vasantha thoppu utsavam* in the month of *Chitra* in 1595 A.D. The 16 pillared *mandapa* in the *Vishwa pundhita thoppu* of the temple was utilised for the conduct of a series of festivals.

The Kamakshi amman temple celebrates the *Shankara Jayanti* in *Chitra*.

Vaigasi (May - June)

An undated inscription in the Brahmapurishvara temple mentions the order of Alapiranadan, alias Sambuvaraya, making arrangements for the revival of the festival in vaigasi which had been subsequently discontinued, after examining the earlier stone records making gifts for the purpose [353/1923].

The *vaigasi* festival is especially of great importance to the Arulalaperumal temple. The *Brahmotsavam* is observed for ten days in this month on a spectacular scale. The festival continues to be observed in the same pattern for several centuries till today. An epigraph of the 14th century mentions the routes for the procession of the deity during the vaigasi festival. The *Garudotsavam* on the third day is specially important in this temple. Vedanta Desika emphasizes this in the *Varadaraja panchasat*. This *utsavam* finds an esteemed place in the compositions of great scholars and music composers like Doddayacharya (16th century A.D.), Thyagarajar and Muthuswami Dikshitar (18th century). An epigraph dated in 1537 A.D. refers to this festival beginning with Alwar *thirunal*. The festival begins with the Senai Mudaliar *utsavam* or Alwar *thirunal*. This is followed by the *dhvaja-arohara* or flag hoisting marking the commencement of the festival. The deity, along with his consorts Shri Devi and Bhu Devi, is carried along the streets of Kanchi to the Sangaikondan *mandapa* in a golden *chapparam* or *vimana*. The festival follows the injunction of the *Pancharatha agama*.

The epigraph mentions the procession of the deity on those ten days on different *vahanas* to the *Garuda mandapa*, *abhisheka mandapa*, *Thimmaraja mandapa*, *Nambi mandapa* and *Gangaikondan mandapa*.

Another important festival of this month is that of Nammalvar, the great Vaishnava *Alwar* whose birth constellation is the star of the *vaigasi* month. On the final day (*sathumurai*), Lord Varadaraja is taken in procession to the Alwar's shrine to receive the *mangala-sasana* (benediction) from this great devotee.

Ani (June - July)

The *Kodai utsavam* or summer festival, the *Thiruppallandu Sirappu* and the *Jyeshthabhisheka* of the *utsava* images were conducted in *Ani* as mentioned in the Pandya and Vijayanagara epigraphs.

Adi (July - August)

The *Adi* festival seems to have been in vogue at the Apatasahayeshvara temple in the time of Sundara Pandyadeva, as mentioned in an epigraph of the temple.

Epigraphical details also tell us about the *Thiruvadipuram* festival in some of the Vaishnava temples, conducted in *Adi*. The *Thiruvadi Thirunal* finds mention in honour of Andal or Sudikoddutha Nachchiyar, and the festival culminating in the celebration of the marriage of Andal, the divine maid, and the Lord. *Gajendra moksha* is also celebrated on the *Adi* full-moon day and finds mention

in an epigraph dated A.D.1592, wherein provisions were made for taking the deity in procession to the *Gangaikondan mandapa* ,and on, return to witness the *Agnistoma* sacrifice. The *Adi* festival continued to be conducted even in the reign of the Telugu-Chola chief, Madurantaka Pottapi Cholan.

Avani (August - September)

The *Pavitrotsavam* is an important festival observed in all Vishnu temples in the month of *Avani*. The gods are decorated with *pavitramala* or purificatory garlands made of silk thread, the main siginificance being to obtain expiation for the sins of omission and commission arising in the daily worship and other religious rites performed in the temples throughout the year. In 1521 A.D., provisions were made for the celebration of this festival in the Arulalaperumal temple. Later inscriptions of A.D.1537 and A.D.1539 of the reign of Achyuta Raya, mentions the *Thiruppavitra thirunal*, among other festivals.

During the 8th regnal year of Vikrama Pandyadevar, endowments were made to the Vijayaraghava Perumal temple at Thiruppuchuli in terms of tax-free lands for *thirupavithram*, for *periyatirumanjanam* and for providing *amudupadi* on the occassion.

To the same temple was gifted a village for celebrating the festival of *Avani thirunal* and for conducting the service *vira champan sandi* which Chambu Kulottunga Sambuvarayan Vira Champan had instituted in the temple on the constellation *Ayilyam*, which was the star of his nativity.

The *Shri Jayanti* or birthday of Krishna on the day of *Rohini* also occurs in *Avani*. The *uriyadi* festival finds mention from the Chola period onwards. An endowment of money was made by one Vada Thiruvengada Jiyar of Tirupati for the conduct of this festival in the Arulala Perumal temple in A.D. 1538. The *uriyadi* festival in this temple continues to follow the same procedure as in A.D. 1517 when the main deity is taken in procession of the Hanuman temple to witness the *uriyadi*.

Purattasi (September - October)

In this month is celebrated the grand *Navaratri* festival for ten days. In the Arulalaperumal temple, both Varadaraja and Perundevi Thayar are brought to the 100 pillared *mandapa* on the *Mahanavami* day. Before being taken for a procession, an *abhishekam* or holy bath for the deities is performed in the *mandapa* of the Thayar shrine. An inscription of the 13th century mentions a festival of *Purattasi*, probably referring to this festival.

Another epigraph of 1530 A.D. mentions this as Mahalakshmi festival in *Purattasi*. More important is the epigraph of 1530 A.D. which mentions the day of *Vijayadasami*, marking the close of the *Navaratri* festival. On this occassion is performed the *Vanni-tree* festival.

On the *Shravana* day of this month is celebrated the *Sathumurai* festival in honour of Shri Vedanta Desika of Vilakkoli Koil at Thuppil, a suburb of Kanchi. Desika is brought in procession from his shrine to the Varadarajaswamy temple for worship. However, not much is mentioned by way of the epigraphs.

During the reign of the Vijayanagar king Devaraya Maharaya, a gift of the village of Tirumangalam in Sengathukottam was made as *sarvamanya* towards the expenses incurred for blowing the trumpets at Idangaiyur on the occasion of the *Thiruppuram* festival in *Airpasi* in the shrine of Kamakshi amman.

Aipasi (October - November)

In this month, besides Deepavali, the festivals for *Mudal-Alwars* and Manavala Mahamuni are observed.

Offerings and festivals in honour of Manavala Mahamuni are specifically mentioned in two inscriptions dated 1555 A.D. and 1582 A.D. The former, which belongs to the time of Sadashiva, records a grant by Parakala Alagiya Singar for offerings to all 12 *Alwars* and some *acharyas* on their birth days. The *acharyas* mentioned are: Thirukkachi nambi (*Mrigasira*) Emberumanar (*Thiruvathirai*), Kurattalwar (*Hastam*), Nathamunigal (*Anusham*) and Periya Jiyar (or Manavala Mahamuni) (*Mulam*).

The record of 1582 A.D. clearly mentions Manavala Mahamuni *airpasi-mula-Sirappu*, the festival conducted on his annual birthday, for which honours were sent from the main shrine. On these days, Arulalapperumal was brought out and bathed with 81 *kalasas* or pots, and received great offerings.

Karthigai (November- December)

The *karthigai deepam* festival in the month of *Karthigai* is one which is observed throughout Tamilnadu in every home and in every temple.

An inscription of 1553 A.D. from the Arulalaperumal temple mentions *Thirukkartigai Thirunal*. Also, the birth star of krithika of Thirumangai Alwar is celebrated on full moon day.

Agni, one of the 5 elements, is propitiated on this occasion. For the Shaivas, the *karthigai* festival has its origin in the Lingodbhava legend.

Marghazi (December- January)

Arudra, in the month of *margazhi*, is the auspicious day for the Kailasanatha temple.

One other important festival is the *Adhyayana utsavam* in Vaishnava temples. This annual festival reveals, with some degree of accuracy, the stages by which the recital of all the 4000 verses of the *Divyaprabandham*, compositions of the *Alwars* and *Acharyas*, were given a footing of equality with the recitation of the

Vedas. So long as the *Vedas* alone were recited, this festival lasted for 10 days. But when the *Prabandham* recitation was also tacked on to it, it was extended gradually to 22 and even 25 days (divided into 2 parts), popularly known as *pagapathu* and *rappattu*.

Special Services or Sandhis

Besides these festivals, certain special services were instituted by kings and other men of note and rank. Such services were called *sandhis*, which were instituted on a large scale in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D.

One of the earliest offerings was the *Kodhandarama sandhi* in honour of Kulothunga III. In the 11th year of this king, another service named *Dharma paripalan sandhi* was instituted by Dharmaparipalan, one of the *Malai-Mudalis* of the king. Other services instituted during the same reign were the *Vira-Keralan sandhi* and the other the *Sundara-Pandya Kalingarayan sandhi*.

The *Gandagopalan sandhi* was instituted on a grand scale by Tillha alias Gangagopaladeva. The other services are *Kumaragopalan sandhi* after his son, the *Rahuttarayan* service after Vijayagandagopala, the *Amarabaranan sandhi* named after Siyagangan and the *Anaikattina- Samharanarayana sandhi* instituted by Rajagandagopalan in A.D. 1220.

Masi (February - March)

In 1038 A.D., during the reign of Chola Rajendra I, tax-free land was given by the village assembly to the temple of Vellaimurthi Alwar of Rajendra Chola Vinnagar for providing 7 *kuruni* of paddy to 3 persons reciting the *Thiruvaymozhi* hymns in the temple and a gift of 2 separate plots of tax-free land by the same assembly, one as *Vajasaneyakkidaippuram* and the other for maintaining a flower-garden and for conducting a festival on the day of *punarvasu* in the month of March.

The grand float festival or *teppotsavam* referred to as *Oddam-Thirunal* takes place on the full-moon day in the Arulalaperumal temple. This is followed by the procession of the images of the Perumal and Thayar to the temple garden now called Dorai *Thottam* for the conduct of *davana utsavam*, or garden-festival, for 3 days.

The main festival in the Kamakshi amman temple was the *Brahmotsavam* in *Masi*, celebrated for 11 days, while *Shivaratri* was the main festival in the Kailasanatha temple.

Panguni (March-April)

This marks the last month of the Tamil year. A good description of the *Panguni* festival is given by Shivajnanaswami in his *Kanchipuranam*. Shakthi Uma devi

performed *puja* for the Lord in the form of Devi Kamakshi. At the end, the wedding of Shiva and Shakthi took place here as prayed for by the celestials.

An epigraph on the *rishigopuram* of the Kamakshi amman temple mentions a gift of 2 villages as *sarvamanya* for *abhayantarapuja* on the occassion of the *panguni utsavam* and *Raja gandagopalan sandhi.*

The wedding function as part of the *panguni* festival is celebrated in all Shiva and Vishnu temples.

In the Arulala Perumal temple, the *panguni Pallava utsavam* lasts for seven days when the *Hastagiri Mahatyam*, the temple *sthalapurana*, is read in the 100 pillared *mandapa* in the presence of the Lord. The *panguni utsavam* is an unique festival in this temple which lasts for seven days and culminates on the *uttiram* day with the marriage of Malayala Nachchiyar to the Lord. People throng in thousands to witness this divine marriage.

An epigraph dated 1582 A.D. of the reign of Shrirangaraya, registers an endowment for offerings to be made during this festival which is specially called *Serakula-nachchiyar-panguni-uttiram-sathumurai.* Further, the images of Serakula Nachiar Varadaraja and Senai Mudaliar were taken in procession to a garden named *Dalavaya toppu* where offerings were made.

We may note that in the *Ahananuru* of the Sangam period, mention is made of a festival in panguni which is equated to *uttira vizha.*

On the central shrine in the Brahmapurishvara temple is a record registering the order of Sambuvaraya in his 5th regnal year granting a *sarvamanya* gift of the taxes levied from the Kaikkolas for the celebration of a festival in *panguni* and for repairs to the temple of Brahmishvara-Udiaya-Nayanmar, at Perunagar.

The Vaikuntha Perumal temple mentions the arrangements made for the supply of drinking from panguni uttiram to karthigai.

Also, endowments were made for a special worship during the panguni month in the Dakshinanathaswami temple (Govindavadi).

Uttarayanam

Some of the festivals owe their origin to the motion of the sun, which causes the seasons, the solstices and the equinoxes and the annual *sankranthi.* The *ayana sankrantis* i.e., the *makara sankramam* and the karkataka sankramam or the *Uttirayanam* and *dakshinayana punyakalas* corresponding to the winter and summer solstices, are observed universally. These occasions, together with the *amavasya* days, are generally reckoned as holy days on which the departed forefathers are required to be propitiated. The sacredness attached to them has supported their observance in the temples as well. In the epigraph, these

days, along with others, are termed *vishesha divasamgal* as distinct from *thingal divasamgal* which occur each month as a routine.

On the south wall of the Smashaneshvara shrine in the Ekambranatha temple, a gift of 108 *kasu* for certain services and offerings to the god, Brahmapurathu Mahadeva, was made, including the bath of the deity with 1008 potfuls of water on the days of *uttarayana*.

A gift of 100 *kalanju* of gold for four lamps in the temple was made by the Pallava king, Raja Marthanda alias Aparajita Vikramavarman to the Vyaghrapadeshvara temple, on the occasion of a solar eclipse.

Car processions

In the Vyaghrapureshwaram temple in the 15th century, an epigraph records the grant of the privilege of waving the *chamara* in front of the image of the temple during car processions to a temple dancing girl named Pirainaru Siradiyar and to her descendants. This was in recognition of her gift of a golden necklace to Brahmapureshvara, the god, in the eighth regnal year of the king, besides a siver plate and a four sided procession car for the temple.

In the Brahmapureshvara temple there is an agreement made in the 22nd regnal year, 1310 A.D. of the Pandya Maravarman Kulashekara I, between two individuals, to provide ghee for a lamp and milk to the god and to send two persons for carrying the images of the god in procession.

There are several idols in the same shrine. There is the idol which is fixed in the *sanctum sanctorum an*d cannot be removed from the place at any cost. It is called *mulabhera* or *dhruvabhera*. There is the idol which is taken out in procession both inside and outside the temple, which is known as *utsavabhera*. During festivals there is the sacred bath (*avabtha*) at the conclusion when a separate idol called *thirthabhera* is taken to a tank or a river and is given a bath there. The very basis for having more than one idol of the same deity is to enable the devotees to participate in the festivals in many ways.

Thus, we find that arrangements were made for the supply of curds to the god Uruni Alwar by the *Madyastha* of Nallarrur who gifted two cows in the reign of Rajendra Chola I in 1015 A.D.

In the Vanishvara temple (Angambakkam), is a record of the ninth regnal year of Pandya Jatavarman alias Sundara Pandyadeva for the daily supply of two potfuls of water for the sacred bath of god Thiruvanishvaramudaiya Nayanar of Vanapakkam.

In the Kailasanathaswami temple a gift of six *kasu* was made for a regular supply of flowers to the god in the reign of Chola Rajendra I.

One of the *mudalis* of Kulasekhara *mandapa* in the Vijayaraghava Perumal temple at Thiruppukkuli made the necessary provision for garlands, flowers and *thirutthalay* to the temple.

In the Kandalishvara temple special endowments were made for the *thiruppali-eludhi.Service and gifts were made of vessels including palittalam* or plates, lamps and lands to the god Shri Uttama Cholishvarattalwar.

An epigraph on the north wall of the second *prakara* of the Kamakshi amman temple registers the grant of eight villages to the goddess Kamakshi amman for food and other offerings by the king on the occassion of his *tulabhara mahadana*, etc.., with the stipulation that part of the *prasada* should be distributed among *sumangali* women.

Of the same period is another grant of Kilpudur, to the goddess for daily offerings for the merit of the king, stipulating that out of the four dishes offered, one should be given to the donor, one to the *sthanam*, one to the servants and one to an outsider.

Fair

Temporary stalls were set up near the temples during the days of the festivals. The *Thevaram* describes a few temples surrounded by stalls.

The Ulagalanda Perumal temple inscription of Thellarrerinda Nandipottaraiyar in the eighteenth year (112 of 1895), registers a trade licence, free of tax, permitting the merchants of the village of Kudiraiceen (=Kudiraipallam, Ponneri Taluk) under the sway of the king Videl Vidugu to open up shops and deal in all sorts of articles, from the most precious camphor, to the least valued one, leather sandals. Here we have a clear example of the royal support given to internal trade by way of fairs and festivals.

Thus, it is interesting to find that almost every Tamil month is marked by festivals of varied importance. There are a number of temples in the Tamil country bustling with festivals all the year round.

The other two classifications of *utsavas* are those which are called *naimittika* and *kamya*. Annual observances of special occassions like marriages or birthdays of the deities or of temple patrons, or to mark the advent of spring, or summer, the harvest, and the like, are known as *naimka utsavas*. And festivals undertaken for special purposes, such as the washing away of the sins of the believers, atoning for errors in worship, offering thanksgiving, etc., like are referred to as *kamya utsavas*. Moreover, the normal temple staff are often augmented for the special *utsavas* by priestly specialists and by other professionals with various skills.

The temple teems with activities, particulary when a special *utsava* is scheduled, and when it is going to last longer than three days. One observes the

construction and refurbishing of special *mandapa* pavilions, various exercises relating to the purification of the precinct and of the personnel who will serve in some official capacity, the preparation of the flag (*dhwaja*), and the raising of it on the flag post (*dwajarohana*), various extraordinary offerings to the directional deities (*balidana*), the ritual germination of seedlings (*ankur arpana*), special invocations *(avahana*a), a number of fire offerings (*homas*) and special attentions directed to the temple images (*snana*, etc..) Among the standard concluding rites, one may expect to observe such activities as paying the participating Brahmins, sponsoring feasts and conducting the final bathing rites of the temple deities.

Kanchipuram, the renowned seat of the Kamakoti *peetham*, abounds in both Vaishnavite and Shaivaite temples in close proximity to each other. We may infer from such a situation that the growth of the two main divisions of the Hindu religion must have been complementary.

KANCHIPURAM, TEMPLE TOWN STRUCTURE
- THE PAST AND THE PRESENT -

by

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Even the earliest historical records know Kanchi as a vibrant urban centre. Its geographical location vis-a-vis the two rivers Vegavati and Palar and the port towns of Mamallapuram, Thiruvidanthai and Mylapore, are some of the important reasons that contributed to Kanchi's growth as a flourishing urban centre. If trade links and strategical location were important factors in the earlier urban history of Kanchi, the great temples were centres of activity in the medieval period.

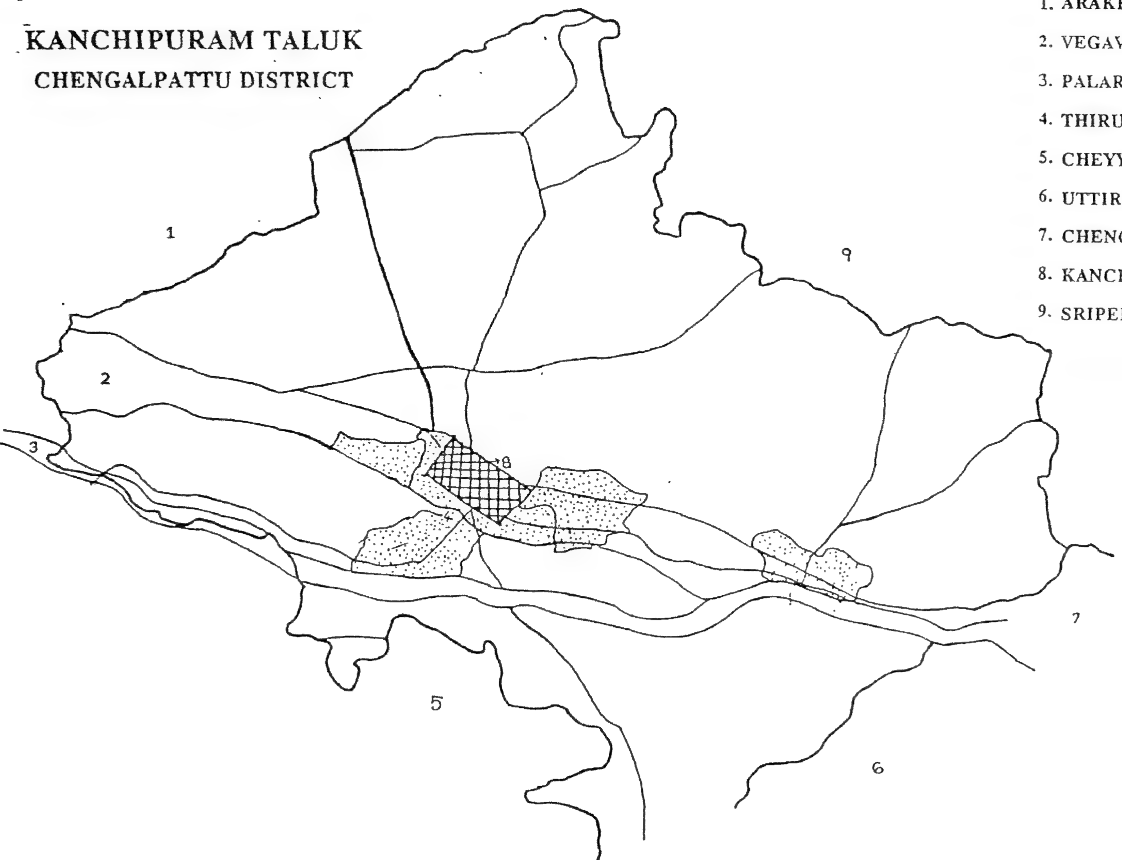
The urban growth and structure of the town could be discussed in four phases. However, Kanchi has a continuous and economically well-sustained urban history.

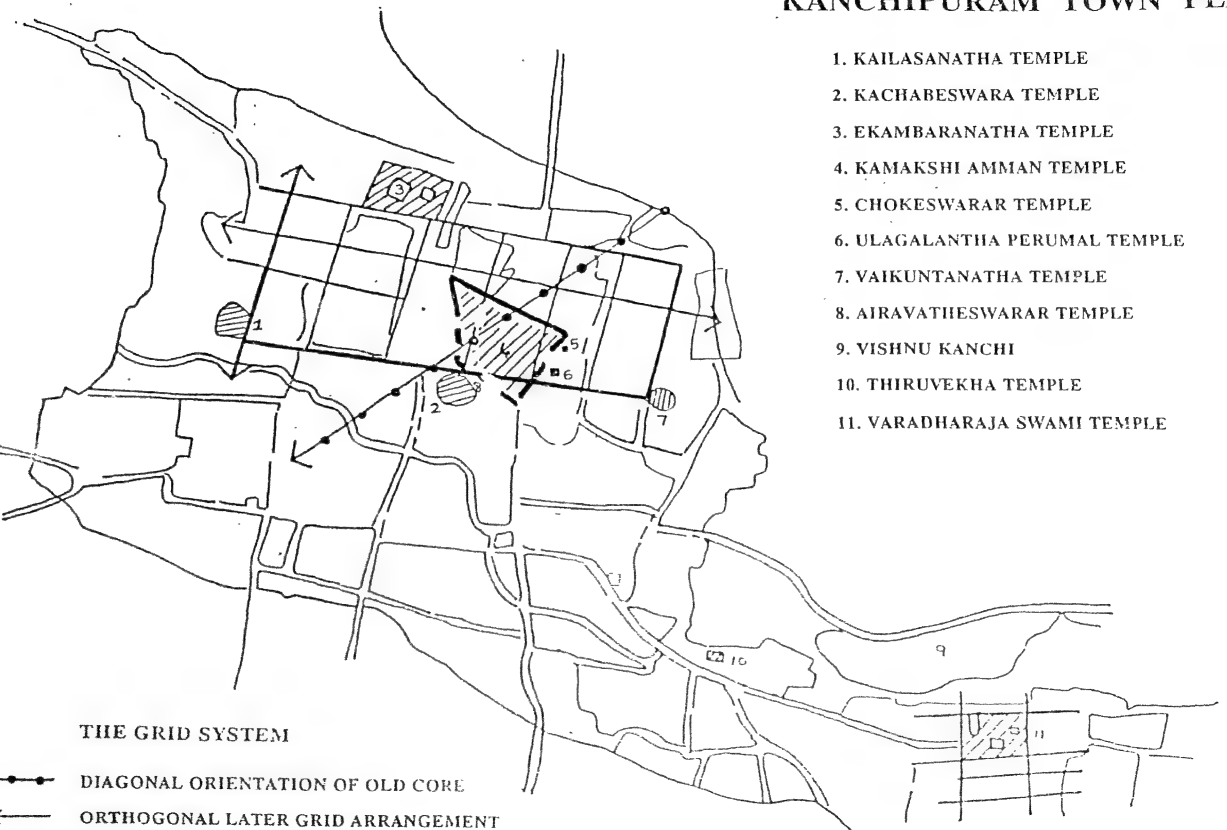
This abstract outlines the development of the town in each of the four phases.

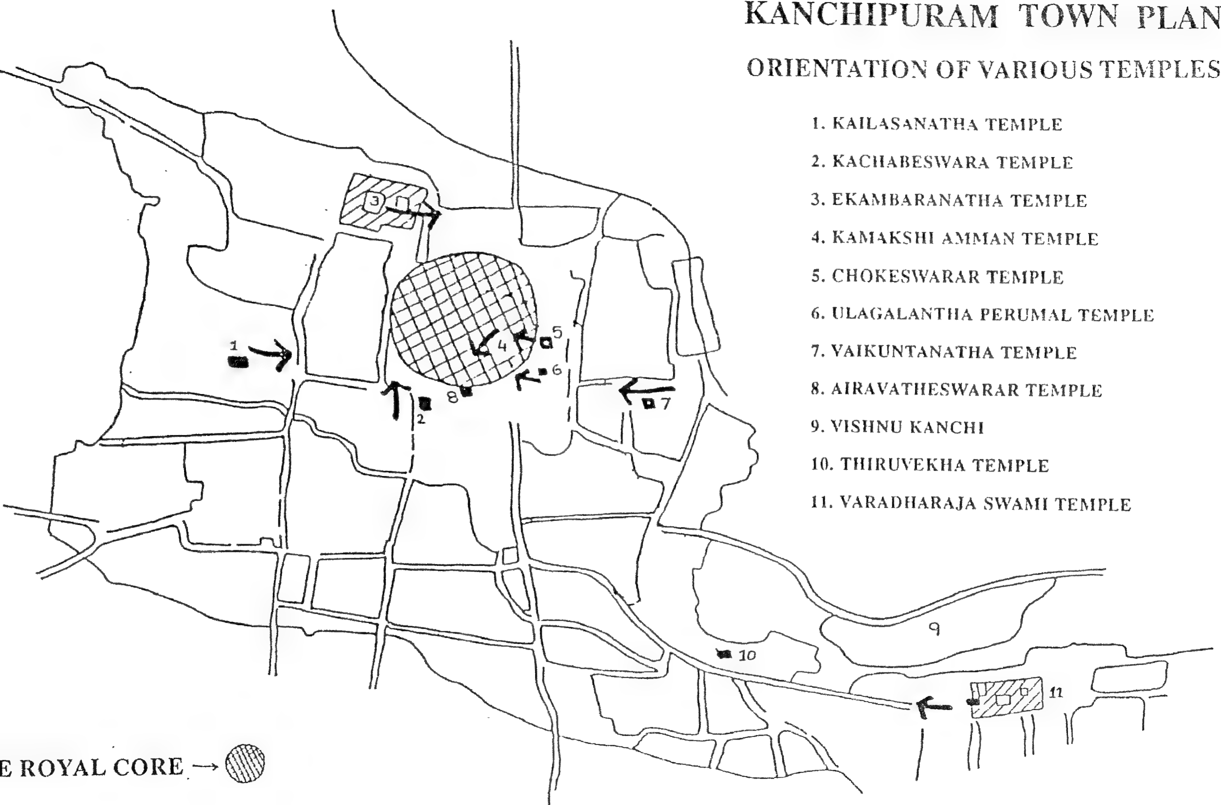
The earliest reference to Kanchipuram town form is found in the *Perumbanatruppadai.*

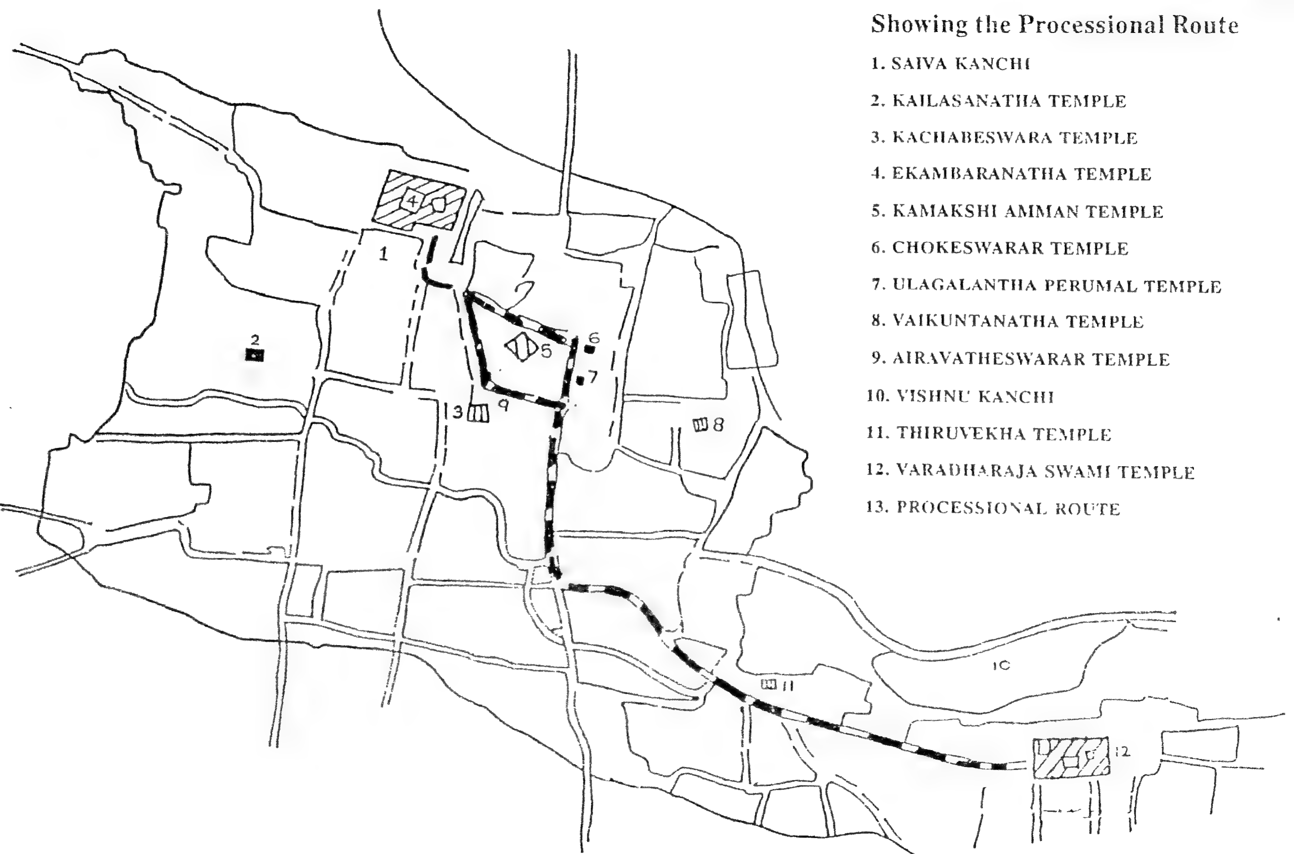
The Perumbanatruppadai gives a brief description of the town. It is in the shape of a lotus flower, with broad streets for the chariots to move freely and a market place on the outskirts of the town. Kanchi need not necessarily have been 'lotus' shaped, the poetic description would be referring to its concentric development around a centre. In the medieval towns, this centre would have been easier to identify. They were usually a temple or a group of temples.

In the 1st century A.D., neither the temple structure nor its ritual pattern had grown to the extent of spinning settlements around them. The earliest temple to be mentioned in Sangam literature, is the Thiruvekka temple, an important Vaishnavite shrine on the outskirts of Kanchi. Archaeological excavations, as reported, demonstrate that this centre could have been a royal palace. The Kamakshi Amman temple, at present, occupies the earliest core area of Kanchi. This hypothesis gets reinforced by two facts. Firstly, the orientation of various later temples in Kanchi face this core area. Which seems to have been fortified with a moat around. Secondly, looking at the present town structure, the rectangular grid layout of Chinna Kanchi contrasts with the diagonally-oriented Kamakshi Amman temple area. This indicates a shift in the planning concept at some point of time. The earlier core would have been diagonally-oriented in relation to the river Vegavati and when the river's course changed, probably,


KANCHIPURAM TALUK
CHENGALPATTU DISTRICT
1. ARAKKONAM TALUK
2. VEGAVATI RIVER
3. PALAR RIVER
4. THIRU PARUTHIKUNDRAM
5. CHEYYAR TALUK
6. UTTIRAMERUR TALUK
7. CHENGALPATTU TALUK
8. KANCHIPURAM
9. SRIPERUMBUDUR TALUK
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KANCHIPURAM TOWN PLAN
1. KAILASANATHA TEMPLE
2. KACHABESWARA TEMPLE
3. EKAMBARANATHA TEMPLE
4. KAMAKSHI AMMAN TEMPLE
5. CHOKESWARAR TEMPLE
6. ULAGALANTHA PERUMAL TEMPLE
7. VAIKUNTANATHA TEMPLE
8. AIRAVATHESWARAR TEMPLE
9. VISHNU KANCHI
10. THIRUVEKHA TEMPLE
11. VARADHARAJA SWAMI TEMPLE
THE GRID SYSTEM
DIAGONAL ORIENTATION OF OLD CORE
ORTHOGONAL LATER GRID ARRANGEMENT


KANCHIPURAM TOWN PLAN
ORIENTATION OF VARIOUS TEMPLES
1. KAILASANATHA TEMPLE
2. KACHABESWARA TEMPLE
3. EKAMBARANATHA TEMPLE
4. KAMAKSHI AMMAN TEMPLE
5. CHOKESWARAR TEMPLE
6. ULAGALANTHA PERUMAL TEMPLE
7. VAIKUNTANATHA TEMPLE
8. AIRAVATHESWARAR TEMPLE
9. VISHNU KANCHI
10. THIRUVEKHA TEMPLE
11. VARADHARAJA SWAMI TEMPLE
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THE ROYAL CORE →


KANCHIPURAM TOWN PLAN
Showing the Processional Route
1. SAIVA KANCHI
2. KAILASANATHA TEMPLE
3. KACHABESWARA TEMPLE
4. EKAMBARANATHA TEMPLE
5. KAMAKSHI AMMAN TEMPLE
6. CHOKESWARAR TEMPLE
7. ULAGALANTHA PERUMAL TEMPLE
8. VAIKUNTANATHA TEMPLE
9. AIRAVATHESWARAR TEMPLE
10. VISHNU KANCHI
11. THIRUVEKHA TEMPLE
12. VARADHARAJA SWAMI TEMPLE
13. PROCESSIONAL ROUTE
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the later builders oriented the remaining part of the town to the new of the river course.

This earlier core was an important trading and learning centre. The earliest Chinese records (Hans record of the 1st century B.C) mentions the trade links with Kanchi. Maloney's thesis on maritime trade and South Indian civilisation could partly explain Kanchi's growth. Kenneth Hall's reference to Kanchi as a cotton producing centre three is not supported by archaeological evidence.

The second phase begins with the emergence of Pallava rule. The political stability ushered in by the Pallavas, and the impetus they gave to agricultural development, are reflected in the monuments and city expansion schemes. This period also marked the begining of the *Bhakti* movement and temples were central to this movement. This period is also considered to be the most productive phase of the liturgical Agamic texts.

During this time, the city seemed to have increased in size and it is likely that the geometry of the city also changed. The settlement pattern as defined by its road network is more or less orthogonal. The orientation of the Kamakshi Amman temple and the formation of the streets around it does not fit the overall pattern. This part is diagonally placed. The locations of the Kailasanatha temple, Vaikunthanatha temple, and the Mukteshvara and Matageshvara temples, mark the other limit of the city. As mentioned earlier, this part of the town is the oldest. The temples are placed in rectangular grid. It is interesting to note that the entire rectangle grid falls into a definite pattern. The central hub seems to be comprised of 4 grids in length and 3 grids in width, each grid being approximately 300 m. x 300 m. The Vaikuntanatha temple is one grid away from the central hub and Kailasanatha is 2 grids away with the Sarvathirtham temple in between. The roads connecting these temples form the main high way. Dr.K.V. Raman observes that the temples, Kailasanatha and Vaikuntanatha, formed the periphery of the town. It is possible that the periphery alone could have offered large open spaces for such construction. It seems that the intention of constructing such temples was extend the size of the city. These temples, in turn, were the new centres of growth.

The third phase would cover the Chola and Vijayanagar periods. The emergence of the Cholas, centered in the Cauvery delta, did not greatly undermine the importance of Kanchi. Because of its strategic location, Kanchi was the secondary capital of the Cholas. Literature and inscriptions refer to the existence of a Chola palace in Kanchi.

Quite typical of this period, Kanchi too witnessed temple-centered urbanization. Temples in Kanchipuram were extensively endowed by the Chola kings. Upto Rajendra I, it looks as though Shaivism was preferred.

Attiyur Vardharaja swami temple was the new urban node in the making. Ramanuja's association with this temple was the main reason for its growth.

Attiyur grew from a small village to an alternative urban node of Kanchi. This period also witnessed the growth of Thiruvekka and its environs. The Vaishnavite Nayaks were greatly responsible for this. Vishnu Kanchi, centred around Varadaraja swami temple, seems to have had conflicting interests with Shaiva Kanchi. An inscription belonging to Krishnadevaraya's period, refers to a dispute regarding the processional route (between Vaishnavites and Shaivites).

Yaperungala vriti, a 12th century text, describes Kanchi as a peacock. Attiyur is referred to as the head of a peacock with Shaiva Kanchi as the body. This reflects the 'two centred' structure of Kanchipuram (Shaiva and Vishnu Kanchi).

Even today, the procession of Vardarajaswami and Ekambaranatha passes around Raja street encircling Kamakshi Amman temple. It echoes the divine status of the Rayas who mediated in the conflict between the Shaivites and the Vaishnavites. The name of the street, Raja street, could be more than coincidence.

In the fourth and final phase, Kanchi lost its importance as an urban centre. Madras became the centre of the East India Company's trading activity. Arcot amd Wallajahbad became important in the new scheme of things. Chinglepet was favoured by the British over the traditional centre, Kanchipuram. Pattrick Geddes, the famous town planner who visited Kanchipuram in1914 is all praise for the wide streets and cleanliness of Kanchipuram. He even goes to the extent of saying that he has not seen a town like Kanchi, not only in India, but also in Europe.

Kanchipuram became the district head quarters only around 1968. Subsequent development plans seem to be ignorant and insensitive to the cultural dimensions of the town. Like any other master plan, Kanchi's master plan too is only concerned with finding new areas for development, as if planning boils down to a statistical and economic exercise.

Kanchipuram Municipality has a population of 1.35 lakhs (1981). The distribution of land use clearly points out that the temple and road networks occupy a large area. The traditional residential areas around the temple are the most densely populated part of the town. The present commercial activity is distributed along the main arteries. Though this pattern is of the traditional *bazaar* type, the present manifestation is visually incoherent. The present development proposals also lack context and vision. Development plans with a conservation bias and a sustainable economic programme would be desirous.

GLOSSARY

Abhaya	Fearless
Abhayantarapuja	*Pooja* done on the occasion of the *Panguni Utsavam* at the Kamakshi Amman temple at Kanchi
Abhishekha	A ritual for the diety
Acharya	Teacher
Adaikalapattu	A Vaishnava work by Vedanta Desika
Adhisthana	The main shrine in a temple
Adhyayana utsavam	An important festival in Vaishnava temples during the month of *Marghazi* (December - January)
Adi	Tamil month corresponding to July-August
Adi-tala	An 8-count beat in Carnatic music
Adiretha	A form of Vishnu
Aduthaanai Urithaanai	Shiva, as described in the *Thevaram*
Advaita	Philosophy of monism expounded by Adi Shankara
Agamanugatam abhihikam	Follower of the *Agama*
Agamanusari	Follower of the *Agamas*
Agamapriya	Person interested in the *Agamas*
Agamas	Architectural, sculptural and other scientific texts
Agni	Fire
Agrahara	Dwelling place, generally of Brahmanas
Ahananuru	Name of a Tamil text - one of the *Ettuthogai*
Ahi	Elephant
Ahimsa	Non-violence
Airpasi	Tamil month corresponding to October - November
Akshamala	Crystal garland
Akshara	A letter of the alphabet

Alambanapariksha	A work by Dignaga
Alamthan uganth	Starting of a *Thevaram*
Alwar	Tamil Vaishnava saint
Alwar thirunal	A festival in honour of an Alwar
Amarabaranan sandhi	A special service for the deity
Amavasya	The new moon
Amsa	Portion or part
Amudupadi	Raw rice
Amutasurapi	A bowl which is always filled with food, which is mentioned in Illango Adigal's *Manimekhalai* and used by the heroine, Manimekhalai, to feed the famine-stricken people of Kanchi
Anagata-vamsa	A Buddhist work by Buddhadatta
Anaikathina-Sauharanarayana Sandhi	Special services to God by kings and oth men of note and rank
Anchi	Desire
Anchudal	Desire
Andal unjal mandapa	One of the mandapas in the Varadarajaperumal temple named after Andal on a swing
Angula(m)	Measurement
Anguttara Nikaya	A Buddhist work in Pali
Anjali	Salutation, benediction
Ankur archana	Ritual of germination of seedlings
Anugraha	Blessing
Aradhana	Worship
Archaka	Priest
Archana	Puja
Ardhamantapa	A small pillared structure
Arudra	An asterism
Ashadha	Name of a month in the Saka calender

Ashram	Hermitage
Ashtanga-vimana	The Vaikunta Perumal temple has three shrines, one over the other, dedicated to Vishnu. This arrangement is known as the *ashtanga-vimana*
Asura	Demon
Athi	A species of tree, *Ficus glomerata*, or fig tree
Atyanta-Karna	One of the titles of Rajasimha (700 - 728 A.D)
Audumbara	Another name for the fig (*Ficus glomerata*) or athi tree
Aurei	Roman coins
Avabtha	Sacred bath of the festival image
Avahana	Special temple invocation
Avanaddha	A musical instrument covered with skin
Avani	Tamil month corresponding to August - September
Avani-thirunal	Festival celebrated in the month of *Avani*
Avantisundarikatha	A Sanskrit work by Dandin
Avatamsaka sutra	A Buddhist text
Avatara	Incarnation
Avatara sthala	Birth place of an Alwar, Acharya or Nayanmar
Avatara utsava	Festival celebrating the origin of a temple
Ayilyam	An asterism
Balalilas	(Krishna's) childhood exploits
Balidana	Ritual offerings
Bangaru	Golden image
Baya	A percussion instrument
Bazaar	Market
Begada raga	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music

Bhagavad Gita	The holy book of the Hindus containing the teachings of Lord Krishna
Bhagavata purana	One of the important *puranas*, containing tales of Lord Krishna
Bhakta	Devotee
Bhakti	Devotion
Bhasha	Speech
Bhattar	Priest
Bhikshu	A Buddhist monk who begs for alms
Bhoga linga	One of the forms of the Shivalinga
Bhogavali	Laudatory poems
Bhu-sparsha-mudra	A gesture of the hand, with one finger pointing towards the earth
Bhu-varaha	An incarnation of Lord Vishnu in the form of a boar
Bhumi dundubhi	Percussion instrument
Bhutagana	Attendant of Lord Shiva
Bila	Jackfruit tree
Bilahari	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Brahma Vidya	A magazine published by the Advaita Sabha
Brahma-sutras	Texts on the Brahman
Brahman	Supreme soul
Brahmarakshasa	Evil spirit
Brahmotsavam	Temple festival
Buddhavamsattagatha	Buddhist text written by Buddhadatta
Chaitrahari	Temple builder
Chaitya	A Buddhist hall of prayer
Chakkiyars	A community of actors
Chamara	Fan
Channa vira	A jewelled ornament

Chapparam	A temple charrot
Charana	Leg
Charnayakkanakkar Tantiraiketta Katai	A part of the Tamil epic *Manimekhalai*
Charvaka	Philosophy of materialism
Cheruppu	Footwear
Chinna	Small
Chintamani raga	A *raga* of Carnatic music
Chitra	An asterism
Chitrakarapuli	A title given to Mahendra Varman I meaning "a tiger among painters"
Chitrapournami	Full-moon day in the month of Chittirai
Chittirai	Tamil month corresponding to April - May
Chonnavannam seida Perumal	A description of Vishnu
Dakshinayana	The winter Solstice
Damaru	A percussion instrument
Danakatham	The merit of giving gifts
Darbar	Assembly
Dardura	A percussion instrument
Darshan	Vision of the Lord
Darshana paripalan sandhi	A special service for Vishnu
Dasavatara	The ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu
Dava	A percussion instrument
Davana utsavam	Garden festival
Denarius	Ancient Roman silver coin
Deva sangha	A Jaina order
Devar cheri	The king's quaters
Deva	Celestial being
Devata	A God
Deveranama	A religious composition

Devi	The Goddess
Dharma	Virtue, moral and religious duty
Dharma-tirtha	Sacred place of Vardhamana Mahavira (founder of Jainism)
Dharmastala	A rest house at a pilgrimage centre, endowed as an act of charity or piety
Dhruvabhera	The image fixed in the sanctum which cannot be removed
Dhwaja	Flag
Digambara	A sect of Jains, meaning sky-clad (or naked)
Divyadesa	Vishnu temple referred to by the Alwars; holy shrine
Divyadisha	Holy shrines
Divyaprabandham	The Tamil compositions of the Alwars, Vaishnava saints
Dravida	Belonging to the Dravidian culture group
Dravida Veda Sagaram	Another name for the Tamil text Thiruvaymozhi
Dravida Vedam	Vaishnavite texts in Tamil by the Alwars
Dravida vimana	South Indian style of temple spire
Dundubi	A musical instrument
Dvadasi	12th day after full moon/new moon
Dwajarohana	Flag-hoisting
Eedu 36000 padi	A Tamil work
Eka-danda	A single stick
Ekadasi	11th day after full moon/new moon
Ektara Veena	A stringed instrument
Ennayiram	Pun in poetry
Ettuthogai	Tamil anthology of verses
Gajendra moksha	The liberation of the elephant by Lord Vishnu

Gana Bhaskara	Name of a text authored by K.V.Srinivasa Iyengar
Ganapatideva-sannidi	A shrine for Lord Ganeshas
Gana	Dwarf, attendant of Lord Shiva
Gandagopala sannidhi	A special service for Lord Vishnu
Gandharan	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Gangaikondan mandapa	A pillared hall named after Rajendra Chola
Gargara	A musical instrument
Garuda mandapa	A pillared hall named after Garuda, a vehicle of Lord Vishnu
Garudotsava	Festival dedicated to Lord Vishnu
Ghatika	University of Kanchi
Ghana	A musical instrument
Ghanta	Bell
Ghee	Clarified butter
Ghoshaka Veena	One stringed *veena*
Gita	Short form for Bhagavat Gita, a Sanskrit work; song
Gopikavastraharana	The stealing of the cowherdess' clothes by Lord Krishna
Gopura	Tower over the entrance of a temple
Guna	Quality
Guru	Hindu spiritual teacher or head of religious sect
Gurukkal	Temple priest
Guruparampara	The tradition of the Guru
Harikamboji	A musical *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Harivamsha	Story of Lord Krishna
Hastagiri Mahatyam	Story of the greatness of Hastagiri
Hetuchakra	Name of a work by Dignaga
Hinayana	A conservative form of Buddhism

Kaliyamardhana	A form of Lord Krishna killing the serpent Kalinga
Kalyana mandapa	Marriage hall
Kalyanakoti-vimana	A spire of the Varadarajaswami temple at Kanchi
Kamakoti-pitha	The name of the *matha* at Kanchi established by Adi Shankara
Kamakshi Ekambranar Puranam	A Tamil text
Kamalamanohari	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Kambhoji	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Kamya utsavas	A festival of atonement/thanks giving
Kanchi mutur Kamakkottam	The temple of Kamakshi in Kanchi
Kanchipuraka	One who is from Kanchi
Kanchiyampuranam	The story of Kanchi, composed by Kachalaiyar Matavashiva Gnanamunivar
Kanjadalayatakshi	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Kannika danam	Giving a girl away in marriage
Kantirpavai	A pillar with a carving depicting the meeting of Aravana Adigal and Manimekalai
Kapala	Skull-bowl
Kapalika	Person having kapala in his hand; belonging to a school of Shaivism
Kapalin	Followers of the Kapalika school of Shaivism
Karkotaka sankramam	*Sankranthi* in the *Dakshinayana* or winter solstice
Karnatik sitar	A musical instrument
Karpuram	Camphor
Karsapanas	Ancient Indian coin
Karthikai deepam	A Hindu festival in the month of November
Karuvarkacchi	A Thevaram

Karyakarta	Doer
Kasu	Coin
Kidandan	The reclining form of Vishnu
Kinnara,Kinnari	A half-human and half-bird couple; celestial musician
Kinnari veena	A two-stringed lute
Kirita	Crown or diadem
Kiritamakuta	A grand crown
Kirtana vidwan	Musician
Kodai utsavam	Summer festival
Kodhandarama sandhi	Service for Lord Rama
Kondukutti	A beat of classical music
Kovil	Temple
Kritakaprakashika	A text compiled by Sundaracharya, consisting of the Brahma *sutras*
Krithika	An asterism
Kritis	Devotional songs
Kshetra	Pilgrimage place
Kshetra tirtha	Sacred pilgrimage place
Kuli	A square of twelve feet (in land measurement)
Kumarakottam	Temple for Subrahmanya
Kundala	Ear-rings
Kurai	Type of cloth
Lalata tilaka	The dance of Shiva
Lavanika	A musical instrument
Leela	Sport
Madhaveya Shankara Vijayam	A book on Adi Shankara by Madhava
Madhyamavati	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Madhyamika	The philosophy of Bodhidharma

Maduraikkanchi	A Tamil work, part of the *Pattupaatu*
Maduravijayam	A work of the Vijayanagara period
Madyastha	Arbitrator
Mahabharata	Hindu epic, believed to have been composed by Veda Vyasa, about the great battle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas
Mahabhuta ghatidana	A ritual performed after a victorrious campaign
Mahajana Jataka	A Buddhist work
Mahamandapa	Pillared portico
Mahanavami	The ninth phase of the increasing moon in the month of Purattasi (September - October)
Mahapradhani	An official of the king's court
Mahapuranas	Predominant *puranas*
Mahavidwan	Great scholar
Mahayana	A school of Buddhism
Makara sankramam	Festival to celebrate the transition of the sun from the southern to the northern hemisphere; now known as Makara Sankranti
Malai-Mudali	Court official
Maligai	A multi-storeyed building
Manathul vaitha Thirupathigam	A hymn from the Thevaram
Mandala-purusha	Court official
Mandapa	A pillared hall or portico
Mangala sasanam	Hymn of praise, benediction
Mangalam	A song of benediction; a song written by Prativati Bhayangaram Annan
Manimekalai	The famous epic written by Ilango Adigal, narrating the story of Manimekalai, the daughter of Madhavi and Kovalan

Manoratha purani	Name of a work by Buddhaghosha, a resident of Magadha
Maraiyanai masilar	A part of the *Thevaram* of Sambandar
Margazhi	Tamil month corresponding to December - January
Markandeya Samhita	A Sanskrit work
Matham	Religion
Mathamnayas	The texts dealing with the institutions associated with Adi Shankara
Maths	Religious institutions
Mattavilasa Prahasana	A Sanskrit drama written by Mahendra Vikrama Pallava
Mithuna	A loving couple
Mohanam	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Mokhshapuri	A place which leads to *moksha* or the liberation of the soul
Moksha	Liberation of the soul
Moksha linga	This refers to the belief that Shri Shankara obtained five spathika lingas from Shiva at Kailasa. One of them is the *Moksha* linga
Mridala	A percussion instrument
Mridanga	A percussion instrument
Mudal Alwar	The early Alwars
Mudali	An official
Mudra	A gesture of the hand
Mukha-mandapa	The pillared hall at the entrance to the sanctum sanctorum
Mukhari raga	Name of a *raga* or tune signifying sorrow
Mukta-tulabhara	Weighing a person against something (gold, jewels, fruit, etc.) to be given as an offering to the temple
Mukti kshetram	A place which leads to *mukti* or liberation of the soul

Mukti linga	Believed to be one of the 5 *sphatika* lingas obtained by Adi. Shankara from Shiva at Kailasa
Mulabhera	The main idol permanently fixed in the sanctum sanctorum of a temple
Mulasomavihara	The main Buddhist monastery
Nadandan	This describes the Trivikrama form of Lord Vishnu. Nadandan in Tamil means 'he walked'
Nadaswaram	A wind instrument used in temples and on auspicious occasions
Nadathari utsavam	Festival celebrated on *Chirapournami*(full moon in the month of *Chitra* or April-May) at the Arulalaperumal temple, when the idol of Lord Varadaraja is taken in procession to the banks of the river Palar
Nagarakrtagama	A Buddhist work
Nagaram	Town
Nagareshu Kanchi	Kanchi, the city of cities
Naimittika utsava	Annual observation of special occasions
Nali	A form of money
Nambanai nagara moonrum	A composition of Appar
Nandi mandapa	A portico for Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva
Nandisangha	A Jaina order
Nara-Narayana	A dual form of Narayana
Narasimha	An incarnation of Vishnu
Natya Shastra	A Sanskrit work by Bharata on dance and drama
Nayanmaar	Shaivite saint
Ninran	Standing
Niravadippudavai	A type of cloth
Nirvana	Liberation of the soul

Nitya	Eternal
Nityadana	Daily giving of gifts/donations
Nritta	Dance
Nyaya	Logic, one of the six systems of philosophy
Nyaya-Vaisheshika	A system of Philosophy
Nyayapravesha	A Buddhist work
Oddam-Thirunal	Float festival
Padam	A type of musical composition
Padikam	Poem of praises to the deity
Padmasana	A yogic pose
Pagalpaattu	The ten-day morning recitation
Palittalam	Plates
Pallavi	Part of a song
Pallavi vidwan	A musical exponent of singing Pallavis
Pan	Song
Pancha-bhuta kshetra	One of the five holy shrines of Shiva, referring to the five elements
Panchabhutas	Five elements, viz, fire, wind, water, space, earth
Panchalinga sthalas	The sites of the five Lingas
Pancharatha agama	A scripture about Vaishnava rituals
Panchayatana	Worship of five deities
Pandu seidha pazha vinai	A *Thirukkurunthohai,* a Tamil work by the Shaivite saint Appar
Panguni	Tamil month corresponding to March - April
Panisha	A way to keep time by the rythmic clapping of hands
Panjaram	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Panva	A percussion instrument

Paramashayi pada	An architectural form according to the *vastu*
Pashupata vidya	A form of worship of Lord Shiva
Pashupatas	Followers of Lord Shiva
Pasuram	Hymn
Patanjali Charita	A Sanskrit work on the life of Adi Shankara
Patashala	School
Pattupaatu	A Tamil anthology of heroic and historical poems
Pattusalins	Royal weavers
Pavadaippudavai	A type of cloth
Pavitramala	Sacred garland made of silk thread
Pavitrotsavam	A festival observed in temples of Lord Vishnu
Payumallidai	A *Thevaram* (Shaivite composition) by Sambandar
Pazhan Pancuram	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music corresponding to contemporary Sankarabharanam
Pedu	A Tamil suffix indicating a place where artisans and merchants lived and carried out their occupation
Periya Thirumoli	Poetry by Thirumangai Alwar, a Vaishnavite saint
Periya	Big
Periyapuranam	A Tamil Shaivite work by Sekkilar
Periyathirumadal	A Tamil work by Thirumangai Alwar, a Vaishnavite saint
Periyathirumanjanam	A ritual in Vaishnavite temples
Perumpanarrupadai	A Tamil work of the *Sangam* period
Peruntheru	A part of a town
Pitha	Religious institution
Pithadipati	Head of a *pitha* or religious institution

Poo mehl	A *Thirukkurunthohai*, a Tamil work by the Shaivite saint Appar
Pooja	Prayer
Poornakumbha	A sacred vessel with coconut and mango leaves given to an honoured guest
Poornima	Full moon
Prachanna Bauddha	A concealed Buddhist, an uncomplimentary later epithet
Pradakshina	Circumambulation
Prakara	Corridar
Pramana-shastranyaya	A Buddhist work by Dignaga
Pramanasamucchaya	A Buddhist work by Dignaga
Prapattulai	A Sanskrit composition by Prativati Bhayangaram Annan
Prasadam	Sacred food
Prithvi	Earth
Punarvasu	An asterism
Punyakal	Auspicious time
Punyakoti-vimana	The spire of some Vishnu temples
Puranas	A class of sacred works consisting of ancient tales or legends. The chief *puranas* are 18, grouped in 3 divisions relating to the Trinity of Hinduism - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
Purattasi	Tamil month corresponding to September - October
Putta pitikai	A Buddhist sacred place (Sanskrit: Buddha pitha)
Raga	A tune or melody of the Indian music systems
Raga bhava	Expressions of the tune or raga
Rahuttarayan	A special service instituted by Vijayagandagopala

Rajavastra	Royal clothes
Ramashtapadi	A composition by Upanishad Brahman of Kanchipuram
Ramayana	One of the two great epics of India narrating the story of Lord Rama of Ayodhya
Rappattu	The recitation of the *Divyaprabandham* every night during the *Adhyayana Utsavam* in Vaishnava temples
Rasa	Feeling or sentiment
Rayagopura	Royal entrance - tower of the temples of the Vijayanagar period
Rishisamudya	Group of monks
Sadhana	Practice, guide
Saggakatham	The means of attaining heavenly existence
Samhara	Destructive
Samiti	Association
Samsara	World; cycle of birth, death and rebirth
Samskara	The rituals each person must perform in a lifetime
Sanctum sanctorum	The inner holy room, housing the main deity
Sandhi	Special religious service
Sangha	Order
Sanghajataka	A Buddhist work in Pali
Sangita mandapa	The hall of music
Sankarabharanam	A raga or tune of Carnatic music
Sankaragranthavali	A text dealing with the institutioı established by Adi Shankara
Sankhya	An orthodox philosophy of ancient India
Sannidhi	Vicinity

Sanyasi	Literally, a wanderer; now associated with a person who rejects society in search of religious fulfilment
Saranga	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Sarvamanya	An endowment
Sathumurai	The last day of the festival
Sattvika	Peaceable, calm
Saveri	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Sena sangha	A Jaina order of monks
Sevvazhi	A *raga* of Carnatic music
Shadvihara	Group of six monastries
Shaiva	Pertaining to Shiva
Shaiva Siddhanta marga	A branch of the Shaiva school of philosophy
Shakti-pitha	A sacred place associated with the Goddess
Shala-shikhara	A hollow spire
Shankara Vijayam	A Sanskrit work about Adi Shankara
Shankarabhakta	Devotee of Shankara
Shankarabhyudaya	A biography of Adi Shankara by Raja Chudamani Dikshita
Shankaracharya	The head of one of the institutions set up by Adi Shankara
Shankha	Conch
Shastra	Canon
Shayanotsava	The festival of the sleeping (Vishnu)
Shikhara	Spire of a temple
Shishya	Student
Shivabhaktavilasam	A Sanskrit translation of the Tamil *Periyapuranam*
Shivarahasya	A history of Adi Shankara

Shivaratri	Festival in honour of Lord Shiva (ratri = night, therefore, literally, "the night of Shiva")
Shlokas	Verses
Shri Bhashyam	A summary of the Brahma *sutras* by Ramanujacharya
Shrivimana	Main spire
Shukla	White
Siddha	Scholar
Siddhi	Occult science
Silakatham	Practice of precepts
Silappadikaram	A Tamil epic of the *Sangam* age
Simhendra Madhyama	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Smriti	The canons of later Hinduism
Snana	The ritual bath given to the deity
Sphatika	Crystal
Sramana	Asceticism
Sthala	Place
Sthala purana	The history of a sacred place
Sthanam	Place
Sthanu	Pillar
Sthapati	Sculptor
Stupa	A Buddhist monument generally containing the remains of a Buddha or Boddhisattva
Sumangali	Married woman
Surasundari	Celestial nymph
Surati	A *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Susira	Wind-blown instrument
Sutruppudavai	One of the different types of cloth produced in Kanchipuram

Svarabhushani	A rare *raga* or tune of Carnatic music
Svaramandala	A stringed instrument
Tala	Beat
Talagha	Rythmic clapping of hands
Talla	Verandah
Tanattar	Temple donar
Tantra	Religious treatise inculcating rites and occult ceremonies
Tapas	Penance
Tapini	A single stringed *veena*, a stringed instrument; another name given to *veena alapini*
Tarka Pungava	Efficient in *Tarka shastra* (logic)
Tata	String
Teppotsavam	Float festival
Thayar	Mother
Thevaram	Tamil Shaivite literature
Thingal divasamgal	Sacred days which occur every month
Thirukkartigai Thirunal	Lamp festival celebrated in Tamil Nadu during the Tamil month of Karthigai corresponding to November - December
Thirupavithram	A festival celebrated at Vishnu temples
Thiruppali-eluchi	Waking the deity in the morning with music
Thiruppallandu Sirappu	A song or hymn in praise of Lord Vishnu
Thiruppavitra thirunal	A festival in honour of Lord Vishnu
Thiruvatara	The Varadarajaperumal *avatara* of Lord Vishnu
Thiruvural	Festival celebrated on the river bed
Thirvaymozhi	Tamil songs in praise of Lord Vishnu
Thoppu Thirunal	Festival celebrated in a grove
Tirtha	Sacred

Tirthankara	Jain Saint
Tirukkadaikkappu	One of the Tamil *Thevaram* written by Sambandhar
Utsavam	Temple festival
Utsavabhera	A metal image of the deity taken out in procession
Uttiram	An asterism
Vastu	The site or foundation of a building
Veena	A string instrument
Vihara	Buddhist monastery
Yati	A beat of classical music